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THE TRAINING OF AN AMERICAN

Anderson Page (1790–1884)
Grandfather of Walter Page and familiar spirit of "The Old Place."
Photograph taken on his ninety-fourth birthday

THE TRAINING OF AN AMERICAN

The Earlier Life and Letters of

WALTER H. PAGE

1855–1913

BY

BURTON J. HENDRICK

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to complete the biography of Walter H. Page. The materials concerning Mr. Page's work as Ambassador were so abundant and of such transcendent interest that they absorbed practically all of the two volumes originally assigned for his "Life and Letters." The author was therefore forced, in his original publication, to compress the fifty-eight years preceding the London Embassy into the merest sketch. But Mr. Page's life in his own country was of great interest and of great significance; above all, it was an era that witnessed the transformation of the backward Civil War South into a progressive part of a united country. In this rebirth of ancient commonwealths Walter Page himself played an important part. It seems appropriate that the materials concerning these activities, as well as Mr. Page's views on American life, the men and happenings of his own time, and the thoughts on literature and human progress which directed his career and ultimately found expression in an international field, should be used in a final volume. There are perhaps half a dozen sentences which repeat statements in the previous work — this for the sake of giving symmetry and completeness to the present narrative; with these slight exceptions, the book is new.

In taking leave of the subject, the author wishes to thank the many friends and relatives of Mr. Page who have assisted the enterprise. His chief acknowledgements are due to Mrs. Walter H. Page, for her confidence in placing these materials at his disposal, and for her kindness in assisting him, at every point, in the prosecution of his labours. Mr. Robert N. Page, of Southern Pines,

North Carolina, was of great assistance in the chapter dealing with his brother's boyhood. Others who have provided letters or documents or reminiscences are Professor Edwin Mims, of Vanderbilt University; Professor Wilbur Tillett, Dean Emeritus of the Theological Faculty of Vanderbilt; Dr. Robert E. Blackwell, President of Randolph-Macon College; the Reverend A. G. Wardlaw, brother of Mr. Page's early friend, John B. Wardlaw; Mrs. Thomas Randolph Price, widow of Page's favourite professor at Randolph-Macon; Professor William K. Boyd, of Duke University (formerly Trinity College), North Carolina; Professor E. C. Branson, of the University of North Carolina; Dr. Edwin A. Alderman, President of the University of Virginia; the late Dr. C. Alphonso Smith, Professor of English Literature at the United States Naval Academy; and Dr. Charles W. Dabney, formerly President of the University of Cincinnati. Dr. William W. Jacques furnished recollections of Mr. Page at Johns Hopkins University; Mr. Louis Howland's memories of early days in New York, Dr. Charles F. Thwing's and Mr. Frank Presbrey's memoranda on the *Forum* days, and similarly Professor Bliss Perry and Mr. MacGregor Jenkins on the *Atlantic* era, have proved valuable. The late Mr. William Roscoe Thayer and the late Mrs. Horace E. Scudder supplied letters and recollections of Page's days in Boston. Dr. Wickliffe Rose, President of the General Education Board, and the late Dr. Wallace Buttrick, President of the General Education Board, generously placed themselves and their offices at the writer's disposal. Thanks are due the firm of Doubleday, Page & Company for use of the records in its office, to Houghton Mifflin Company for giving access to its letter files for the period covering Mr. Page's association, and to Johns Hopkins University for furnishing historical matter dealing with

its earliest days. The studies of Professor John Spencer Bassett have done much to form the writer's opinions on social conditions in the South before and after the Civil War.

He also wishes to thank his secretaries, Miss Madelon Mackenzie Shiff and Miss Frances Tracy Dwyer, for service of a highly efficient order.

B. J. H.

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THE TRAINING OF AN AMERICAN

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CHAPTER I

"THE OLD PLACE"

I

"OUR family," Walter Page once wrote in a reminiscent mood to his sons, "has been a sturdy one, to our knowledge, for a hundred and fifty years. At times it has been distinguished. Men of unusual qualities came now and then and sturdy men almost always. It is a strong stock. My own acquaintance with them now reaches over four generations, including your own generation. The oldest one that I personally knew — my grandfather, your great-grandfather — was a strong character, a vigorous personality. He married the strongest woman he knew (I suspect). Surely she was robust in body and in character. I recall her as a strong woman. Her slaves loved but feared her. Her children held her in a sort of awe. She was positive."

Nothing could be more significant than the adjectives Page uses in describing his ancestors. They were "sturdy," "strong," "vigorous," "robust," "positive." These are not the qualities which the conventional Southerner attributes to his forebears. He rather likes to think of them as "chivalrous," "brave," "courtly," "polished," and "dignified." That Page did not, first of all, identify himself with such virtues gives an immediate insight into his character. He was not the traditional Southerner of

song and story, nor did his family resemble the romantic type that almost dominates the scene in Southern literature. Page went even further in his modest disclaimer. Not only was he not the "traditional Southerner," but he insisted that few Southerners ever were. Always an image-breaker, he loved to dissipate prevailing misconceptions of Southern life, and one of the most absurd, in his opinion, was that highly sentimentalized picture of his native country which for several generations held sway over the American mind. The American stage, which for nearly a century had found the Southern plantation a particularly sympathetic theme, the American song writer, in more recent years the motion picture, had done their part in enhancing the departed glory of the Southern States. The result was that merely to mention the Southern home called up a definite if somewhat standardized mental image. The central figure was a beautiful old house, with porches covered in honeysuckle, seated in the midst of thousands of acres of plantation, usually with the cotton in full boll, above which appeared the heads of hundreds of contented and languidly working black men. Moonlight, the songs of the darkies in the distance, the flitting forms of beautiful maidens clad in ruffled skirts, their hair falling about their shoulders in ringlets, handsome, brilliant cavaliers bending over their hands, old gentlemen in black garments and black stocks walking with stately, meditative tread, lovely white-haired matrons smiling indulgently upon the benignant scene, coloured mammies, coaches and four and coats of arms — such were the essentials in the portrait. The average "gentleman" of this society looked with scorn upon the commercialists of the North; labour he despised with a genuinely aristocratic fervour; fox-hunting, cock-fighting, and gambling were the chosen occupations of his leisure — and nearly all his

time was leisure; "honour," especially the honour of the women of his caste, was almost as much a ritual as the Anglicanism he professed in religion; if to his manly virtues he added a propensity to run into debt, to drink hard liquor to excess, and to let all business concerns go to the dogs — these were merely the heroic failings which, after all, added the necessary touches to the gentlemanly ideal. The Southerner had thus become the finest product of American manhood, the Southern woman the complete expression of womanly virtue and beauty, Southern plantation life the perfection of American culture and domestic delight. The happiest fortune that could befall an American was evidently to be born in this society.

This happy fortune, however, was not the fate of Walter Page. In certain sections — along the Potomac and James Rivers in Virginia, or in the rice bottomlands of South Carolina — such a social organization, or something resembling it, did exist, but there were few Westovers in the North Carolina region. Accurately to understand Page's more realistic surroundings another misconception must be abandoned. The "poor white" has played a rôle as important as the "Virginia cavalier" in the creation of an imaginary South. The average American insists on regarding the Southern organization as consisting of three rigidly defined strata — the plantation gentleman, the white vagabond who hung in ignorance and poverty upon his skirts, and the black helot. In recent years the best Southern historians themselves have dispelled this illusion. Southern whites were not automatically assignable to two groups — tidewater gentlemen and social derelicts. The first class, if it ever existed in its most romantic form, had an extremely limited membership. That there was another order, variously known as "poor whites," "crackers," and "hill billies," is indeed true, but these unfortu-

nates have figured too extensively in accepted descriptions of Southern life. The fact too generally overlooked is that there was a third group, resembling rather the first than the last in mind and manners, yet distinctly separate from both. This was the great class of sober-living and thrifty proprietors. Their possessions were more frequently farms than plantations, and some of them rather small ones; they cultivated their lands themselves, frequently working their own plough, like industrious New-Englanders; usually they had a few slaves — anywhere from one to a dozen. Their establishments were well and neatly kept; their toil yielded a sufficient income to provide most comforts and certain luxuries; their sons and daughters had a good schooling, and occasionally instruction in the higher branches at a denominational college. Their lives were plain, even commonplace, but they were honest, intelligent, hard-working, frugal, above all, religious. Their religion itself, however, set them apart from the fine aristocrats of the coastal plain, who, for the most part, were "churchmen" — that is, Anglicans; while the farmer class were overwhelmingly Baptists and Methodists, with a generous proportion of Presbyterians. Compared with the stately Episcopal ritual of Virginia, their manifestations possessed a zeal which itself expressed the earnestness of their lives. Their attitude toward politics and the overshadowing Southern institution also marked them as a distinct class. They were Jeffersonians, and they remained Jeffersonians long after the statesman of Monticello had ceased to be the great patron saint of the Southern States. In the political battles preceding the Civil War, they followed the banner of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster rather than that of John C. Calhoun and Jefferson Davis. They accepted slavery indeed, and the time came when they took the battlefield in its defence, but

their emotions on the subject were not fanatical, and their devotion to the Federal Union — at least until the final break — was always a cherished influence in their lives. That their slaves were far better treated than those at least of the lower cotton regions is the testimony of most observers;[1] especially they had a Christian — perhaps a Methodist — interest in treating their black dependents as human beings. Unnoticed as have been these Southern farmers by the poets and romancers, simple as were their living habits and manners, their character was clean, substantial, vigorous; they were very numerous, too — far more numerous than the type that has almost monopolized public attention — and, in the judgment of the historian, they constituted the economic backbone and the real moral fibre of the Southern States.

From this class came many Southern leaders; in a certain sense Woodrow Wilson belonged to it; from this class also came Walter Page. Precisely what connection existed between the North Carolina Pages and the great Virginia Pages is not known. That a North Carolina Page should have become Ambassador to Great Britain during the Great War and that a Virginia Page — Thomas Nelson — should have become Ambassador to Italy during the same crisis, and that both men should have made a name in letters, though in different fields, would naturally persuade the followers of Galton to trace their origin to a common source. The two men, good friends in mature life, frequently discussed their possible relationship. They even used to address each other as "cousin," but neither could produce the facts that justified the salutation. A significant bit of biological evidence came to light one day, however, when Thomas Nelson Page met, for the first time, Walter Page's father. "Walter's father looked enough

[1] See Frederick Law Olmsted, "A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States," p. 367.

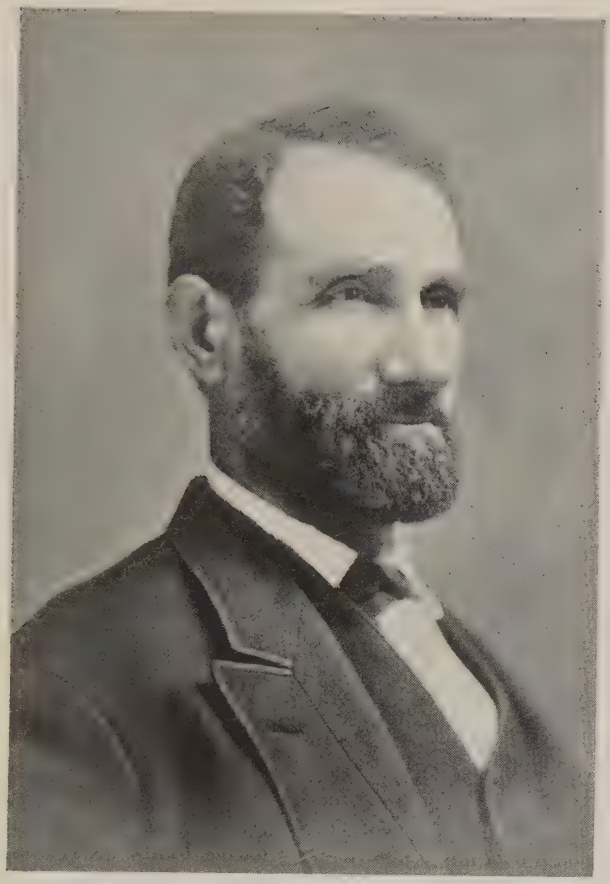
like Papa to be his brother," Thomas Nelson wrote to his family. That the North Carolina Pages came from Virginia is a fact. The first existing bit of family history is the record of the marriage bonds given by Lewis Page to Sallie Justice in Lunenburg County, Virginia, on February 13, 1778. This Lewis Page was Walter Page's great-grandfather. His first name suggests an association with the Lewis family of Virginia — to which belonged the famous Meriwether Lewis, who, with William Clark, blazed the trail across the prairies and the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast. The suggestion has no solid basis, for there are no records, not even any family traditions, for such ancestry; yet to linger on a possible connection between the Pages and these heroic pioneers is a great temptation, for the quality that, in 1805, sent Meriwether Lewis across the wilderness is precisely the quality that, up to the present generation, has been an outstanding one in the Page family. The tenderness of Walter Page himself for the moist earth was that of a lover for his mistress; the achievements of the Page tribe have invariably resulted from their intimate dealings with nature; and it is this characteristic that led Lewis Page away from his Virginia home and caused him to begin life anew in an uninhabited forest in North Carolina. It is not surprising that his family records disappeared in the process, for the land was still a frontier, full of deer and wolves and Indians. Another thing that Lewis Page apparently lost was the accepted religion of Virginia; the primeval accents of Methodism were more adapted to his new buckskin life than the "church" in which he had been bred. The census of 1790 places Lewis Page in the "Tabb's Creek District" of North Carolina and says that his family consisted of "one free poll" and "one black poll." His apparent ownership of one slave, his manifest fondness for

the woods, his religion, his Virginian origin, and his marriage in Lunenburg County, are almost all the available information concerning him.

His son Anderson, born in 1790 in Granville County — just over the border line from Virginia, probably the "Tabb's Creek District" referred to in the census — is a much more clearly defined character. He belonged to the substantial farmer class, as distinguished from the cavalier. But his possessions indicate a considerable state of prosperity. He owned a farm of twelve hundred acres, and operated it with from thirty to fifty slaves — a number which would make him a not unworthy figure on a Virginia plantation; he did an extensive carrying business from Wake County to the great tobacco and cotton mart in Petersburg, Virginia, transporting not only his own farm produce, but that of his neighbours. Anderson showed that interest in education which has been a consistent Page trait for several generations. As far back as 1832 he established a primary school at his Wake County home, "Oaky Mount," for the instruction of his own large family, and near-by children. It is not surprising, therefore, that four of his eight sons and three of his daughters received something in the nature of an academic education. His son, Allison Francis Page, Walter's father, born in 1824 at the "Old Place," again displayed the migratory instinct. The region, in Frank Page's boyhood, had become more populated than in his father's early days, and was the scene of many prosperous farms and settlements, but an enticing tang of the primeval still lingered about it — a long stretch of pine forest and sand, full of birds, with few roads worthy of the name, and with an occasional house, of which that of Anderson Page was the largest. As a boy, hard work was Frank Page's daily routine. "Recall a fact like this!" said Walter Page, describing Wake

County conditions at that time: "My father as a boy went with my grandfather's caravan of wagons, loaded with cotton, all the way from Wake County to Petersburg, Virginia, to sell it — over miserable roads, camping by the roadside at night and taking a week to make the journey either way; and in those days hogsheads of tobacco were rolled from Granville County to market at Petersburg." From all that can be learned, however, this life in the open air was entirely congenial. Above everything else, the journey lay through the pine woods! What the sound of the sea was to the Greeks, the peace and understanding of the valleys and mountains and lakes to Wordsworth and his companions, the stern hillsides of New England to the Puritan pioneers — all this the forests were to Frank Page. The great stretch of pine that begins in Virginia and ranges as far south as northern Florida, swept through that part of North Carolina in which the Page clan found its root. Frank Page was never content outside this, his natural medium — below a floor of sand covered deep with pine needles, above the stately expanse of perennial green. There was nothing in this country that Frank Page did not love. It became the basis of his life and the captain of all his occupations and enjoyments. "Matter of fact" is a term his old friends sometimes use in describing him, yet his love of the forest, his preference for the life of a lumberman to that of a farmer — his father's occupation — shows that even if he lacked the spirit of poetry, at least he had the impulse of adventure.

Frank Page himself was almost as lithe and outstanding as his own pines. He was six feet five and one half inches in height, yet, again like his pines, though he was tall, he was spare; his active out-of-doors existence had produced a physical development that was exclusively bone and



Allison Francis Page (1824–1899), father of Walter Page

muscle. His face — bearded in later years — contained no superfluous flesh; its important structures stood out boldly; the long forehead, the deep eye-sockets, the quiet, meditative eyes, the generous nose, the large ears pressing closely to the skull, the great, erect head, were an appropriate covering for the qualities of character that guided his life. Of these, perhaps the most abiding were energy, determination, conscience, all compacted with a sane and homely idealism — characteristics that, in him at least, existed in the same nature with gentleness and an unselfish interest in the happiness of his family and his neighbours. That his religion possessed a rugged Old Testament virility and perhaps an Old Testament harshness, was true; his elemental mind was not disturbed by the refinements of theologians; God was God, heaven was heaven, and hell was hell; and in all three he most fervently believed. His Methodism was thus of the most authentic Wesleyan brand. No negro could curse and remain in Frank Page's employ. Theatre-going, dancing, dicing and card-playing were likewise forbidden. Strong drink was his most cherished abomination. He was a prohibitionist three quarters of a century before that great refusal found its shrine in the Federal Constitution. These convictions, however, were merely his rules of conduct; they did not produce, in his case, an unsympathetic attitude; his nature was essentially yielding and congenial; he had an exuberance of humour; he could laugh, and laugh long and loudly; his laughter, indeed, still echoes in the region of his old home. A phrase used frequently in describing him is "big-hearted." His vast native intelligence has also left its mark. On the business side it made him, in after years, a rich man — a builder of railroads, the creator of new towns, the pioneer who opened to settlement great areas of his native State. In its public aspects — and this was

Walter Page's chief boyhood recollection of his father — this same intelligence and this deep devotion to his country persuaded him to independent opinions not especially popular at the time, but the height of wisdom when viewed in retrospect. Though Frank Page owned slaves himself, he regarded the institution with abhorrence. In this he was Jeffersonian as in most other political views. He was a leader in his district of the group that regarded the slavery discussion of the fifties with dismay. For Frank Page was not a sectionalist; indeed, not first of all a Southern man, at least in political conceptions: he was a nationalist, a unionist. In the disturbing era preceding the Civil War he expressed these ideas with the utmost freedom and eloquence. His own hearth was an open forum, in which anti-slavery sentiment and loyalty to the Federal Government were the watchwords. These discussions became the earliest of Walter Page's memories; though reared in a Southern home, the atmosphere of his childhood was that of allegiance to an expansive and united country.

II

One day in the late forties, Frank Page, big, hearty, gaunt, striding along with swinging arms like a mighty sylvan god, plunged into the forest to seek his fortune, with little capital except his restless ambition and his physical and moral strength. Presently — he was about twenty years old — he found himself in the neighbourhood of Fayetteville and here for several seasons he wrung a living from the pine trees — for they furnished not only the sentiment of his life, but its sustenance. In those days a "turpentine orchard" frequently gave a young man his start in life. A crew of negroes and several thousand trees were the necessary stock in trade. The sap was collected in little boxes notched at the base of the pines, put in

barrels made by negroes on the premises, and shipped to all parts of the world. Then the trees themselves were sometimes cut down and made into lumber. If Frank Page did not find great fortune in this first venture, at least he found happiness. His business headquarters was the little town of Fayetteville, at the head of navigation on the Cape Fear River. Scottish immigrants had settled this region in the latter part of the eighteenth century; so Scottish were they that, even in Frank Page's sojourning there, Gaelic was still spoken in certain places. These Scots, however, had become sufficiently "Americanized" in a couple of generations to name their central town after Lafayette, who passed through it on his famous visit in 1824. It was a Scotch family, the Barclays, that had given their own name to the settlement of Barclaysville, halfway between Fayetteville and Raleigh. One of its daughters, Esther Barclay, was famous for other reasons than the customary kiss received from Lafayette in the course of his momentous visit. She and her husband kept the tavern — the Half Way House — at which the Raleigh–Fayetteville stage stopped for a night's rest and change of horses; she was celebrated for the dignity, and even state, with which, after her husband's death, she presided over this establishment, even in her last years, an advanced invalid and bedridden, personally receiving the most distinguished guests. Testimony to her qualities is borne by a witness whom the South once regarded as none too friendly — Frederick Law Olmsted, who visited this region, and experimented with North Carolina stage-coaches and inns, a few years before the Civil War, leaving his impressions in a famous book which did more to expose the real evils of the slavery system than "Uncle Tom's Cabin" itself. Mr. Olmsted was severe upon the untidiness of the North Carolina inn and its keeper, but he makes one exception to

his indictment. "I met the driver," he writes, "returning with two fresh horses, and at length, before eight o'clock, reached a long one-story cabin, which I found to be Mrs. Barclay's. It was right cheerful and comforting to open the door, from the dark, damp, chilly night, into a large room, filled with blazing light from a great fire of turpentine pine, by which two stalwart men were reading papers, a door opening into a background of supper table and kitchen, and a nice, stout, kindly looking Quaker-like old lady coming forward to welcome me. My bedroom was a house by itself, the only connection between it and the main building being a platform, or gallery, in front. A great fire burned here also in a broad fireplace. A stuffed easy chair had been placed before it. And this was a pine woods stage-house! But genius will find its development, no matter where its lot is cast; and there is as much a genius for hospitality as for poetry. Mrs. Barclay is a Burns in her way." [1]

This lady's daughter, also named Esther Barclay, married John Samuel Raboteau, a descendant of Huguenot refugees, and settled in Fayetteville, only a few miles from the inn Mr. Olmsted so appreciatively describes. Their daughter, "Kate" Raboteau, was, in 1850, a slender, blond-haired, blue-eyed, pink-cheeked girl of eighteen. She had received a rather better education than came to most Southern girls of her day, for she had attended Peggy Eastwood's school at Raleigh and the Louisburg Female Academy, so that, in addition to the primary branches and the needlework that represented the educational standard of the time, she had acquired a smattering of French and algebra. "Kate" Raboteau — or Catherine Frances, to give her a more formal name — also had another not com-

[1] Frederick Law Olmsted, "A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States," pp. 326–27. New York, 1856.

Walter H. Page at the age of three
From a miniature

mon taste — she was a reader of good books. Her deeply religious spirit was not incompatible with a serene and cheerful nature, a lively sense of humour and an affectionate attitude toward most of the serious problems of life. Frank Page and Catherine Raboteau were married July 5, 1849. Turpentine farming and turpentine distilling, logging and lumbering, formed their early domestic background. As soon as a particular pine field was exhausted, they would advance into a new one. In this hard first five years two children were born, both of whom died in infancy. About 1854 Frank Page, in the search for new material, purchased four hundred acres of woods about eight miles west of Raleigh. The great advantage of this new site, in addition to the forest — pine, oak, and sycamore — was the railroad recently built. Frank Page and his wife moved to his new location and began life anew. Within a year — on August 15, 1855 — a third child, a son, was born. He was christened Walter Hines Page.

III

Any one who sees Cary to-day will have a false idea of Walter Page's childhood home. A scrambling village has been built around the railroad station, destroying the early beauty of the spot. Seventy years ago the place did not even have a name; it was popularly described as "Page's." The first house was a rough two-story building; when he became more prosperous Walter's father built, in front of this, a two-story frame dwelling, connecting it with the original structure, the rooms of which were needed for the growing gamily. A veranda, a well-kept fence, a flower-lined pathway — jonquils and irises in abundance — added grace to the establishment. The house sat on a gently rising hill, in the midst of a great grove of oak trees; in the rear stretched for miles the ever-

beckoning forest. A country road skirted the front of the yard and a short distance beyond this ran the railway. For several years this remained the only habitation of the region. It was far neater and more pretentious than most rural houses in the South; Frank Page kept his place carefully painted and the numerous outbuildings in good repair. Life there was pleasant; the sky was intense in its blue, the grass and leaves in their green; the wild flowers were unusually animated; however, except for an occasional wagon lumbering by, or a wheezy train crawling out of the forest and vanishing into it again, the general feeling was that of solitude. And that eternal rustling of the pines! How deeply these everlasting trees entered into Page's life became evident in those ambassadorial days in England, when the dying man, worn by his five years' vigil, turned his face from the battlefields of France and again looked longingly westward across the Atlantic, his one desire merely again to see and whiff the pine woods of this boyhood home.

Those interested in tracing the influence of early associations on character can profitably linger over the first five years of Page's life. Afterward his activities and his writings possessed a virility that startled and even shocked, yet all this time a trait that was just as conspicuous was gentleness. It is perhaps not fanciful to trace something of this quality to those early years at "Page's." His father frequently took long trips on business; for four years there was no other baby; there were few neighbours; and Walter and his mother, for weeks and months at a time, lived alone. And it was an existence not without its idyllic aspect. Walter's mother was little more than a girl — in the early and middle twenties; Walter himself was an attractive child — his eyes a deep brown, his hair a mass of brown curls — his interest always keen, his intelligence

always active. His mother loved the out-of-doors — and flowers and birds, and long walks in the woods thus became daily recreations; there was fishing too — a few brooks and Wiley Baucom's pond; and there was also much reading. There were no schools in the vicinity at this time, so, in addition to her other duties, Walter's mother became schoolmistress, with this small boy as her solitary pupil. Page never saw a schoolroom until he was ten years old; his mother taught him to read, write, and cipher, and also gave him, thus early, his introduction to Scott and Dickens. One thinks of Mark Hopkins's definition of a college as a log, with a teacher at one end and a student at the other; and there is perhaps another advantage, at least in the development of the quieter emotions, when this teacher is the mother and the pupil an only child. For the sessions were frequently held out of doors, on the little knoll back of the house, or, better still, by the old company mill on Crabtree Creek. This latter spot was one of Walter's favourite haunts, then and afterward. It was built as far back as 1810, and for two generations the farmers had brought their grain and corn there for grinding. A clear stream burst over the dam, part of it flowing over the mill-wheel — of the beautiful "overshot" variety; but merely watching this process and the turning of the stones was only part of the charm. The real attraction was the creek itself, the walks along its banks, the trees and the flowers that bordered it, the deep forests that stretched along either side. Beech, oak, sycamore, and pine grew so profusely that, in summer, they almost arched the stream. In spring, too, the banks were a mass or rhododendron, maidenhair fern, and arbutus. An ideal spot for a kindergarten and primary school! That love of nature which proved such a solace to Page's mature life was thus an inheritance of his childhood, for all these things, as well as

fishing, boating, and swimming, became as much part of his education as the McGuffey readers in which he first learned to spell his way.

So far as Walter could observe, human existence was a tranquil process, but the times themselves were far from tranquil. His first five years represented one of the most agitated eras in American history. It was the time of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Kansas-Nebraska discussions, the rise of the Republican party, Lincoln-Douglas debates, the performances of John Brown — of the many attempts to compromise a subject that could not be compromised. With all these attempts, however, North Carolina, especially the part in which the Pages lived, was sympathetic. Though the State had been one of the last to ratify the Constitution — refusing to do so, indeed, until the first ten amendments were added — its devotion to that document and to the Union was strong. It looked coldly upon the opinion of its sister State, South Carolina, that the mere election of Abraham Lincoln was a sufficient provocation for the secession of the South. Probably a majority of North Carolinians disapproved the act of the cotton States in withdrawing from the Union and forming the Confederate Government at Montgomery, Alabama. At first the people refused even to call a convention to discuss the question of secession. The leading men in the State strongly opposed such radical action. Not until President Lincoln issued his call for troops and demanded from North Carolina its proportion, did the situation change. It wished to remain in the Union, but could not bring itself to take up arms against its neighbour States. Like Virginia, therefore, North Carolina reluctantly cast its lot with the Confederacy. But a considerable minority of North Carolinians, even under these circumstances, regarded the step as a terrible one. To this group Frank

The old Company Mill on Crabtree Creek, near Cary, one of the favourite rambling places of Page as a child

Page naturally belonged. All through the war he never concealed his opinion that it was a mistake. Yet his attitude was not ungenerous or carping, or lacking in complete sympathy for the Southern predicament. Moreover, these Southerners were his friends; his family had lived in the South for many generations; they were his own people and he loved and admired them. He therefore offered himself and his resources to the Confederacy — always trusting that the difficulty would be solved in some way that would not mean a permanent disruption of the Union. He kept his lumber mill going day and night, devoting the entire product to the Confederate Government. Loyally as Frank Page served what had now become his country, he never had the slightest doubt that the North would win. In the first place, it was right; secondly, it was powerful, while the South was weak in the resources that meant success in war.

The settlement around the Page house was growing. Walter's father had three sawmills; several other families had moved in, making necessary the construction of more houses. To Walter's solitary existence playmates were now added. His memory mainly associated with the war period, however, not the boys and girls of the white families, but a little negro called Tance. Most Southerners when children had such negro companions, who combined the functions of playmate, protector, and instructor in the lore of boyhood. This character was a kind of Southern substitute for the *paidagogos* of the Greeks. He was old enough to protect his charge from the attacks of bigger boys; he could also guide him through the woods, take him fishing, purvey all kinds of local gossip, sometimes terrorize him with ghost stories and negro folk tales. Tance and Walter now held many whispered conversations about a vague and distant phenomenon

known as "the war." It was in some way associated with drum and fife, with a new flag, with raw recruits drilling in fields, with a strange breed of monster called "Yankees," with patient women sewing stockings and making bandages, with prayers in Asbury church, up the road, for victory against the "enemy," with the tears of mothers as bad news came from "the front," with the arguments of Frank Page about the "cruel sacrifice of men in a hopeless cause," and, even more poignantly, with a coffin that was occasionally lifted off the train at the station, right at the foot of the Page house. In spite of these convincing reminders, the whole thing seemed unreal — as unreal as one of the Waverley novels which Walter's mother used to read him. In Page's recollection, the war in its length seemed almost a lifetime; there were periods of exultation, bell-ringing, prayers of thanksgiving in the little church, followed by times of deep depression. Finally came frenzied reports of fire and slaughter approaching the Page home. Tance brought stories he had heard of an ogre named Sherman who, after laying waste great areas of Georgia and South Carolina — burning cotton, destroying cities, ripping up railroad tracks, murdering men, women, niggers, everybody in his path — had struck the soil of North Carolina and was rapidly advancing in their direction. Day after day the episodes became more harrowing. And there was other even more disquieting news — that the South was breaking, that Grant was rapidly closing in on Lee in Virginia, even — incredible and malicious fabrication — that Lee had surrendered. Now Sherman had reached Fayetteville and destroyed the Southern arsenal in that town; hard on its heels came the news that Raleigh — only eight miles away — had surrendered and was being patrolled by Federal troops. And then the thing became a reality indeed. One morning

Walter and Tance saw cavalrymen coming rapidly along the road — apparently in flight; their uniforms were not blue, but gray. They were General Joe Wheeler's sorely pressed Confederates fleeing from the advancing Federals. They even witnessed a cavalry skirmish — an engagement that represented perhaps the last fighting of the war. Then, after a brief period, came the blue-coated soldiers of Sherman, in pursuit, and what a vast and endless host! Walter, his brother Robert, and Tance stood at a second-story window and watched, for a whole day, while the Federal army — infantry, cavalry, artillery — rattled by. Its size astounded and overwhelmed them; and they did not know that this procession was merely one column of Sherman's army, and that Sherman's army itself was only one of the mighty hosts that Lincoln had called into being to crush the Southern Confederacy.

They were naturally frightened, especially as Walter's father was away from home. Their fears were not allayed when a grave-looking man, in a general's uniform, came up to Walter's mother, saluted, and said that he should need the Page house for his own use. This was Horatio Seymour, afterward Democratic candidate for President — and a mile or two away, at the Jones place, another future Democratic candidate for the Presidency, General Winfield Scott Hancock, took up his headquarters. General Seymour occupied one of the lower rooms, leaving the rest of the house for the Page family, while his officers pitched their tents in the front yard, amid the oak trees. Here Seymour stayed for three weeks, but the visit did not prove unpleasant for the Page family and has left no bitterness. The burning of the camp-fires at night rather appealed to Walter's romantic instinct, and the behaviour of the army did not substantiate the dreadful stories that had preceded it. Yet there was one intense moment Walter

Page never forgot. One morning a Federal courier came up to his mother, who was sitting on the porch.

"Good morning, Madam," he said. "You people have certainly played hell with us now!"

She was a little shocked at the language, but still more so at his message.

"President Lincoln has been shot!"

IV

The war was over; it came to an end only twelve miles from Page's home, with the surrender of Johnston's army near the present city of Durham. Its conclusion marked another great milestone in Page's life; now for the first time he went to school. However, even then, in 1865 — when the boy was ten years old — there was no schoolhouse in the community. At this tender period Page gained his earliest insight into one of the great delinquencies of his native country. From colonial times the North and the South had pursued radically different courses in popular education; the Southern States had nothing comparable to the great system of tax-supported public schools which was then one of the dominating facts of life north of the Potomac. Primary education in North Carolina, so far as it existed at all, was in the hands of clergymen, who conducted schools as part of their parish work and as a means of supplementing their small incomes, or in the hands of private citizens who joined forces to hire a poorly paid teacher to instruct their own children. Schoolhouses, in any way resembling the modern well-equipped buildings, were unknown; a room in the family homestead, or perhaps a hastily thrown together log house, inadequately supplied this need. Only the more prosperous classes had schooling to this extent; the children of the poor grew up illiterate, while the thought of teaching negroes to read

and write had occurred only to immigrating philanthropists from New England. Page's own life as a child thus furnishes a panorama of educational conditions as they existed then and for at least half a century afterward. The public-spirited citizen who came forward to provide a primary school for his boyhood was Mr. Adolphus Jones — himself a graduate of the University of North Carolina — who lived about two miles from Page's home, on the main road. The enterprising youngsters themselves provided a schoolhouse, in the manner then common in the region; they cut down oak and pine trees, fashioned them into logs and "puncheons," built a long one-story log house, and in this, for two or three years, winter and summer, Walter Page obtained his first instruction. Adolphus Jones's house, not far away, contained resources which, for the time, amounted to little less than a university. Here was a library of several hundred volumes, hurriedly brought from New Berne, to protect them against the Federal forces when they were advancing against that town. Froissart's "Chronicles," Sir Thomas Malory, Miss Austen's novels, the "Spectator," Pope's "Iliad" — what greater treasures could we ask for a growing and imaginative mind? And life itself was almost as romantic as anything in these fascinating pages. There were, for example, the Confederate veterans, some of them armless, others on crutches — most of them still attired in their gray uniforms, the buttons and all insignia covered — this by the orders of the War Department. The stories these men could tell — and they loved to tell them — almost made the knightly tales of Sir Thomas and even the Greek heroes of "Mr. Pope" sound rather tame. They also had a curious pastime suggestive of a mediæval tournament. In front of the Jones house was a road for "quarter races" — races, that is, a quarter of a mile long. At the end was

erected a pole, to which was attached a ring. The mounted Confederates, armed with "lances," would rush full tilt — the object being to put the head of the lance through the ring. A rather inadequate apology for a joust, perhaps; yet it must be remembered that all these "knights," as the boys called them, had recently experienced real shot and shell, so that it was an easy matter to invest them with heroic qualities. "After one of these tournaments," says an old boyhood companion, "Wat and I read 'Ivanhoe,' again."

There were long walks — to Raleigh, the now abandoned camping-grounds of the Confederacy; to Chapel Hill, the seat of the University — seven prosaic and rather dilapidated brick buildings; there was plenty of hunting — rabbits, 'possums, partridges, and raccoons. The Confederate veterans showed the boys how to make shot from the lead which they found plentifully in the places where the Union soldiers had pitched their tents.

Walter himself was devout as a child, though in this, as in all things, rather shy and reserved. And, as always, he was studious. "There's my bookworm," his father would say, half proudly, as he pointed out the boy curled up with a volume in his hand. For the substantial routine of the Page existence — its wood-choppings, its sawmills, its cotton factories, its blacksmith shops, its acres of maize and potatoes — Walter's interest was not practical. Possibly, when it came to physical labour, he was indifferent; at least his father could not easily put him back of a plough or send him out to sow. Certain family anecdotes illustrate this juvenile preference for mind over matter. His mother, who believed exercise not harmful, would hand him a pail and a hoe and send him out to the potato field. In an hour or so Walter would dutifully return and deliver the receptacle full of potatoes. An obedient and industrious child! Unfortunately the mother had not wit-

nessed the entire performance. For Walter would commonly take with him his dusky *paidagogos*, Tance, and when he had reached the field, would hand the farming implements to this devoted soul. He would then comfortably place himself under a shady tree, extract a cleverly concealed book, and settle down to the cultivation of his intellect. By the time he had finished the chapter, Tance would bring him his potatoes and he would solemnly take them home.

In these surroundings Walter spent his days from his tenth to his thirteenth year. By this time he had outgrown the primary era in his education, and the question of his future became the most pressing problem around the Cary fireside. When a Southern boy of those days began to display unusual mental qualities — especially if he belonged to a Wesleyan family — parents and friends invariably picked him out as destined for one career. Such promising talents had evidently been set aside by the Lord for the ministry. Walter's father and mother perceived this meaning in his fondness for reading, his aptitude for geography and arithmetic, his tendency to meditation and his readiness in the discussion of serious matters. To see the boy bestowed in a Methodist pulpit was evidently to be the great solace of their declining years. That Walter should be sent to an academy, and afterward to a denominational college, was inevitable. The Page family was pinched for money, but that was far from the point; any sacrifice for such a cause was divinely commanded. In due time, therefore, Walter boarded the train for the Bingham School at Mebane, North Carolina. This was one of the leading educational institutions in the South. It was founded as far back as 1793 by William Bingham, a Presbyterian clergyman from the north of Ireland. Its tone was strongly religious and aristocratic. It

thus furnished an illustration of that ecclesiastical and caste control of education which Page afterward criticized as one of the limitations of the South. It was also emphatically Southern in feeling. One of its proprietors, Major Robert Bingham, had served in Lee's army and had been present at Appomattox Court House. So fervid was the patriotic spirit of the place that, after the surrender, Bingham became a military school and the uniforms of the boys were modelled after the gray of the Confederacy. The battles of the Civil War, constitutional discussions of Secession and the depredations of the "Yankees" — these topics mingled inextricably with schoolboy marches through Gaul and the misadventures of the ten thousand Greeks in their search for the sea. Page, clad in a Confederate uniform, his brown eyes looking ahead, his wavy brown hair just visible under his Confederate cap, his straight and slender figure erect, a musket on his shoulder — such was the daily life that he led from his thirteenth to his fifteenth year. Pretentious as was the Bingham School in its thoughts and high-minded as it was in its code of honour, in all the ponderables it shared the hard days of the South at that difficult time. The school buildings were merely a collection of log houses. Page occupied a single-storied hut, lately created from the trees of the forest, with half a dozen other boys. Clay chinked between the logs helped to keep out the cold air. A murky kerosene lamp lighted his way through algebra and the Greek alphabet. A pine table and one or two improvised chairs made life simple and dignified. Every night Page would let down his rough bunk from the side of the wall and fall asleep. Discipline of this kind is never discouraging to scholastic work, and Page, between drills and war discussions, sports and fights, absorbed much information in the subjects preliminary to a college course.

The military atmosphere of Bingham left a lasting impression. "One high day of school life," he afterward wrote, "was the parade day of the battalion at the State Fair. The cadets wore their new gray uniforms of the same colour as the tattered coats in which their fathers and kinsmen had fought on Virginian battlefields. And, in this particular year, the second year of my cadetship, it was a greater day than usual, for a bust of Stonewall Jackson was to be presented. A veteran of great oratorical power, who also had served under General Jackson, was to make the presentation address; and all the Confederate veterans within reach had been invited. They came from every part of the land, many with armless sleeves, many on crutches, most of them in well-worn and many in ragged, gray uniforms, in battered hats and caps, and some with remnants of flags. They were the saddest relics of a brave army, I imagine, that were ever seen; for most of them were now but wrecks of men. Years of exposure, of ill-fed fighting, for some of them years of prison life, and years of neglected wounds and injuries since, years of poverty, too, and years of political oppression — these men had borne the physical scourging of the nation for its error of slavery.

"They had borne it innocently, too, for they were plain countrymen who were blameless victims of our sectional wrath. But they had borne it also recklessly. They had looked on death — had lived with it, indeed; and they had miraculously survived and crawled to barren homes from the clash and slaughter and from starvation and such deadly vain endeavour as no other men have ever known and lived; and now a brief period was left them to muse on their great adventure, which so filled their minds that thought on other things was impossible.

"The little bust was covered and placed on a pedestal which stood on a platform under the trees in the fairground

this beautiful October day; and the battalion of cadets stood as a guard of honour about it, in their shining new uniforms. A bugle sounded and a drum was heard, and the veterans formed in line at a distance, to march to the benches that had been reserved for them next the standing cadets. A vast crowd filled the few seats farther away and stood all round about. When the bugle sounded a mighty shout went up. It was a yell that became a roar, and the crowd took it up, yell after yell, and then the band struck up 'Dixie.' Every voice in that vast crowd sang. The veterans were by this time in line. As they came within sight of the crowd every man and woman arose. Hats and handkerchiefs were thrown into the air. They shouted, they clapped, they yelled. The old soldiers bared their heads. At last they reached their places; quiet came; and after a long prayer the orator was introduced. He was talking about the Lost Cause and Stonewall Jackson, and many of his hearers would have sat till they had dropped asleep from exhaustion, hearing this great adventure praised. It was meat and drink to the rest of them. The climax of the long speech was the unveiling of the bust. It was covered with a cloth and a cadet stood at either side, who, when the orator gave the cue, was to pull the cords which would remove the covering. I was one of these. At last the colonel stepped to the very edge of the platform, gave the signal to uncover the bust, and, lifting his great voice to the utmost, said:

"'Soldiers, Comrades, Heroes! Behold our immortal commander!'"

More families, white and black, came to "Page's" immediately after the war. The town would have made greater progress except for the fixed principles of its Patriarch — for such Frank Page had now become. He

owned practically the whole town; as he sold lots to settlers, a clause was invariably inserted in the deed that alcoholic liquors should never be brought upon the property. In a few years the place had sufficiently grown to be incorporated as a village; Frank Page inserted this same prohibitory clause in the charter; he now gave his local habitation a name, and herein once more his temperance principles came to the front, for he called it Cary, in honour of General Samuel Cary, of Ohio, a "temperance orator" who had recently visited the settlement in advocacy of the great cause. But Frank Page was interested in other things than prohibition. The educational shortcomings of Cary gave him much concern. For several years the little log schoolhouse up the road had provided the only schooling in the region. With the growth of Cary an institution of somewhat larger scope became desirable. One of the most valuable additions to its citizenship was Mr. Rufus Jones, a brother of Adolphus, and, like him, a Chapel Hill graduate — and a man ambitious in an educational sense for his large family. Frank Page and Mr. Jones now joined forces to make Cary itself the seat of an "Academy." A large grove of oaks furnished building materials. Trees were cut down; the Page sawmills turned them into lumber; and in a brief period a two-storied structure rose. Enough of the oaks remained to give the new school a sylvan setting, and the brooks and woods provided relaxation in plenty from the school hours. When Walter Page came home from Bingham in 1870, the new Cary school was ready for students, and here he spent his last year of preparation. The instruction was excellent, for the presiding genius was Haywood Merritt, a graduate of the University of North Carolina and famed in the region as a Greek and Latin scholar. Certain anecdotes of Page and the Cary Academy are even now part of the

traditions of the section. The whole atmosphere was that of the forest and punishment for misbehaviour took the prevailing woodsy character. A large collection of unlovely stumps — remnants of the trees of which the "Academy" had been constructed — littered and disfigured the surrounding land. Any boy who overstepped the rules was sentenced to the removal of one of these obstructions. Page was still fond of the woods and streams, and one fine spring afternoon, when the outside world was enticing, he tied the tongue of the school bell so that the usual summons to the afternoon session did not sound; instead, the entire student body, boys and girls, adjourned for a picnic amid the pines. As a result of this infraction the remaining stumps were removed and the land completely cleared.

V

All during these years, and for a long time afterward, another influence was exercising a greater effect on Walter's opinions and character than the Cary Academy or his discursive adventuring in literature. To omit from any account of these youthful days his grandfather, Anderson Page, and the ancestral homestead, would be to forget the scenes to which Walter's mind, even after it had reached maturity, constantly turned. "Little grandfather" he was called, and appropriately enough, for though Anderson Page had eight sons, every one of them more than six feet high, he was himself below average stature. To Walter Page, this slight, quiet, wise, and philosophic figure was more than an ancestor: he was a whole epoch in American history, the physical embodiment of a great and almost forgotten age — and therein lies his significance. For this is the story of an American citizen, and, despite the note of democracy that informs its

The Page home at Cary, North Carolina, where Walter Page was born and lived in childhood.
From a drawing by Hope S. Chamberlain

every page, it really begins with that thing democracy is supposed to abhor — a grandfather. That Walter Page was no ancestor worshipper is already apparent; but this particular progenitor was not a name inscribed upon a tombstone; he was a communicable reality of his youth. Consider one fact: this Anderson Page was born in 1790, when George Washington was President of the United States, and Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton his most active, if somewhat inharmonious, lieutenants. When Anderson was twenty-one, James Madison occupied the White House; he was thirty-two when James Monroe proclaimed his doctrine, fifty-four when Henry Clay was a candidate for President, and seventy-one when Fort Sumter started the Civil War. This chronology has a deep historic import. It means that Anderson Page had done his formative thinking in the period of Washington, Jefferson, John Marshall, and Henry Clay. What kind of a Southerner would result from such a training? Despite certain misunderstandings of Walter Page's career, one of the strongest motives of his life was his devotion to the South. But the South that he revered was not the one that had emerged from Appomattox. Page believed that his own particular South was the real South, and that the one which encompassed his youth, in its emotions and in its loyalties, was largely a spurious product. When his thoughts reverted to his own region, it was the vigorous, if somewhat shrunken figure of "little grandfather" that symbolized the great departed era. For the time to which Anderson belonged was a large-minded one. It was the time when the South produced constitution-makers, great jurists and great statesmen; when, to a considerable degree, it governed the nation. It represented that period, from about 1790 to 1830, before the rise of cotton-growing and slavery had wrenched Southern his-

tory out of its accustomed path of leadership and started it on a disastrous decline. How many Americans to-day realize that most of the great Southerners from 1790 to 1830 despised and distrusted slavery and had the deepest affection for the Federal Union which they had done so much to create? And that was the South of Anderson Page, this living contemporary of Jefferson and Madison. In Anderson's mind, the events from 1830 to 1865 were merely a bad dream — the perversion of a great Southern ideal; true Southern progress consisted in setting back the clock and reëstablishing the South on the principles that had ruled it in his youth and manhood.

The house in which the old man lived formed an appropriate habitation for these ideas. It was not a Southern "mansion," but an exceedingly substantial homestead. In its early days it had a slightly pretentious name: it was called "Oaky Mount," but, in Walter's boyhood, this had passed out of remembrance, and the spot was simply known, to a multitude of descendants, as the "Old Place." Architecturally it would have cut a sorry figure beside certain country seats on the Potomac, yet, despite its lack of beauty, it did possess, if not distinction, at least, character. Its entrance had a suggestion of the "old Southern home"; there were two stone posts, with an arch overhead, connecting them, and, on the arrival of guests or relatives, a negro boy would open the gate ceremoniously. This gave access to the driveway — old Anderson liked to call it "the Avenue" — nearly a quarter of a mile long, lined on both sides with great oaks. On the left were ranged the log cabins that had once lodged the slaves, now, in Walter's boyhood, for the most part unoccupied. As one glanced up the archway he would see, at the end, standing on a little hill, the old white house, with its verandah, a lattice-work underneath, overgrown with honeysuckle,

and its white columns, shrouded on one side by a great cluster of oaks, and on the other by a fine growth of cedar. An old windlass well, a small building on the right where one of the sons taught school, a large number of other structures — the usual buildings essential to a well-kept farm — gave the impression of prosperity. The old house itself — or rather collection of houses, for additions had been made from time to time as the family grew, the several sections being connected by roofed-in porches — was two stories high, gabled, with brick and stone chimneys outside, one bearing the date, "1820," when Anderson had settled in what was then a wilderness. Around the house was a garden, full of old-fashioned flowers, and a beautiful well-cropped lawn — the whole enclosed in a white picket fence. Behind the house was a graveyard, marked mainly by the tiny headstones of children — wherever a grandchild might die it was brought back here for burial — and beyond this, for a long distance, stretched the plantation. A cotton gin — unused in Walter's time; a cotton press which he loved to push around with his small hands, "as old in its pattern as Pharaoh" he said; a loom house — for here most of the wool for the slaves' clothing had been spun; a shoe shop — many of the slaves in the old days were excellent shoemakers — in themselves were reminders of the isolated and primitive life that prevailed when the "Old Place" was in its prime — when a Southern plantation, indeed, was almost a feudal estate, itself producing the food, clothes, shoes, and other necessaries of life. Even in Walter's day the dominant impression was one of complete restfulness and human companionship. "Cool water and a grateful shade and gentle breezes all belonged there," he once wrote, "and a peacock strutted on the lawn, indolent and proud. You felt the presence of servants without seeing them, docile, well

trained, who appeared when you wanted them and were never in sight at other times." "The visits I made there," he wrote "were the happiest times of my childhood, for I felt that all things were stable there. The mellowness of the place, the ripened wisdom of the old man, the cool quiet of the library, were parts of the foundation of things; the garden with box hedges and beds of sage and thyme and a row of fig trees by the fence — the odours of these have made my memory of the place savoury and pleasing through whatever barren stretches I have travelled in any period of my life."

Over the "Old Place" Walter constantly roamed as a child. It was for him, as he frequently said, the "base and beginning of things." "The world was divided into two parts: people who had this old house as the background of their lives and people who did not have it." In after life he loved to recall the zest with which, as a child, he had cut his initials on the soft soapstone that formed the foundation of the main chimney; years afterward, when he visited the place — a sad occasion, for it had become a hopeless ruin — he found the initials there, "W. H. P." standing out boldly amid numerous other inscriptions — for three generations had marked their passing in this way. Nor did he ever forget another pleasant sport of his childhood — "fishing for spiders." In spots where the grass was thin the ground was marked by their holes; the boy, a wheat straw in his hand, would lie prone, stealthily lower the straw and then gently pull it up; almost invariably a spider would be found clinging to the end!

But the interior of the house held even greater charm. Like the outside it promised comfort rather than elegance, yet it did contain several fine old mahogany pieces, a grandfather's clock in the corner of the library, and a huge fireplace, before which the old man loved to sit and re-

arrange the logs. The deep, leather-bottomed chair seemed to be almost corporeally a part of himself. "Library" was perhaps a pretentious name for this room, but there were bookcases and books, and some of the volumes — speeches made long before the Civil War, pamphlets dealing with the great issues of that crisis — gave Walter his first glimpse of what he afterward used to say was a great but sadly neglected branch of American letters — its political literature; the attic, too, held plenty to incite the imagination, and in this Walter found a copy of Macpherson's "Ossian." Here were an old flint-lock musket and a military suit of faded blue; perhaps it was a juvenile insistence on the heroic, but these and other like relics Walter inevitably associated with the Revolutionary War. An early account book — which Page afterward preserved among his family incunabula — gave a clear picture of old Southern life. "To my slave Pompey, $800" — so began the entries under a general heading "Anderson Page" — written in a strong, clear script, resembling, Page said, the handwriting of George Washington.

The old man and his family circle were far more stimulating than the house itself. As Walter, sometimes riding in a buggy with his mother, sometimes alone on horseback, entered the gate, there in the distance he would see "little grandfather" sitting on the porch, slowly smoking a long reed pipe, the old darkey Primus invariably at his side, and perhaps Aunt Helen with her knitting — the one unmarried daughter who, after the mother's death, had remained as housekeeper. "Howdy Hines!" was the greeting, for the old man apparently liked to call him by his middle name. Walter never remembered Anderson Page when he was not old; he was sixty-five when Page was born and he lived to be ninety-four. Advancing years had not greatly diminished his vigour. His favourite boast was

that he had never had a doctor in his life; and his short, emphatic figure, seated on his horse, was a familiar sight in the surrounding country. Yet he was a quiet man, even a silent one. For long periods he would sit in meditation; at other times he would talk, and talk volubly. He evidently discovered a fellow spirit in "Frank's boy," as he called Walter, finding him especially alert when he discussed "Mr. Clay" and the old South that he was chiefly interested to recall. Recent events in American history had not disturbed his serenity or his patriotism. When he spoke of "the South," he had in mind only the South of his boyhood and maturity; when he referred to Virginia, it was the Virginia that was the most populous State in the Union — how many Americans know that it once contained more people than New York? [1] — and the breeding ground of Presidents. The present generation has forgotten that sectional feeling between the North and the South was a product almost entirely of the slavery agitation; if it existed in the days of Jefferson and Madison it existed without bitterness. That Anderson Page felt no such emotion, therefore, was merely another sign that spiritually he belonged to the first third of the nineteenth century. If he referred to the Civil War, there was not the slightest note of resentment. "My grandfather," Walter Page said afterward, "did not even know the sectional feeling that the war had aroused." When the old man admonished him to "serve your country," he was not referring exclusively to the Southern States. Massachusetts he frequently mentioned and always with admiration. The influence of such thoughts as these, coming from so venerable a source, upon the plastic mind of a

[1] Even more surprising, North Carolina once had a larger population than New York. The census of 1790 gives the most populous States as follows: Virginia, 747,610; Pennsylvania, 434,373; North Carolina, 393,751; Massachusetts, 378,-787; New York, 340,120.

boy, can hardly be calculated. They were, indeed, as Page said, "the background of my life."

Anderson had eight sons and four daughters; every one grew to vigorous maturity and had a long life. It was not until one saw the eight sons that the appropriateness of his title, "little grandfather," became apparent. These huge figures frequently gathered at the place for family celebrations, and there was seldom a time when two or more were not on the premises. Several, with their families, made their homes at Cary and were thus the familiar phenomena of Page's childhood. There was the Reverend Jesse, a Protestant Methodist preacher, afterward a member of the orthodox Methodist fold — the theologian of the family, at home in Latin and Greek and also — a rare accomplishment in the North Carolina Conference — not unfamiliar with Hebrew. Sometimes he would read the Bible aloud; the children would notice that the language varied slightly from the accustomed scriptures; the explanation was that Uncle Jesse was translating from Hebrew as he read. There was "Uncle Jim," famous especially for the mighty volume of his singing voice; when, on a summer Sabbath afternoon, he led the choir in "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," it is said that the hymn could be heard within the radius of a mile. There was Pascal, the family scholar — "He had the best head on his shoulders of any man I knew," Page afterward said; Pascal, as befitted his philosophic name, remained on the "Old Place," conducting a boys' school in the little house to the right of the roadway. Politics was also represented, for there was "Uncle Rufus," a Whig leader before the Civil War, and for several years Secretary of State of North Carolina. Three of the four daughters also possessed more than the average education. Malvina had married a Methodist preacher, Hines Whittaker, and from

him Walter Page had derived his middle name. Ann Eliza was also the wife of a Methodist preacher. The name of another daughter, Araminta, suggests an acquaintance with Elizabethan poetry.

But the brightest of all the Page sons, and the greatest glory to the children, was Dr. John. "In our family," Walter Page once said, "the women have all the beauty," but his Uncle John was a fine figure of a man. In the family circle he represented not only good looks, but science; he had been graduated from a Philadelphia medical school before he was twenty-one, and was familiar in all parts of Wake County as a country doctor. There was something in this occupation — a hard one, involving long rides at unseasonable hours and in all kinds of weather, and affording first-hand glimpses of human misery in its many forms — that developed the sympathetic virtues. And Dr. John was a cheery and expansive soul. In particular he loved children — a taste he was abundantly able to gratify at the "Old Place," for here were frequently family gatherings, on birthdays and other holidays, and forty or fifty children, nieces and nephews, were not unusual. All of them, especially Walter Page, looked to the Doctor for instruction and entertainment. He played the violin, and not badly; he was famous as a "reciter"; he could declaim Burns with all the Scottish flavour, and "Jo Anderson" and "Highland Mary" or even "The Cotter's Saturday Night" were inevitable parts of such celebrations. But the Doctor had one accomplishment that rendered the others insignificant. After listening to the violin and Burns and one or two other poets, one of the boys or girls — sometimes Walter himself — would say,

"Now, Uncle John, get down your Shakespeare."

If the Reverend Jesse was a man of one book, and that

the Bible, Dr. John was the master of another, and that was Shakespeare. And no request could please him more than that he exhibit his fondness for the great man. What followed was not a mere reading, but a dramatic entertainment. The children settled themselves in chairs and on the floor; this was to be no five or ten minute affair; Shakespeare meant not merely an elegant extract, but the reading of an entire play. There was no theatre anywhere in the neighbourhood; but it was not necessary, for Dr. John was a theatre himself — scenery, stage manager, actors, actresses — a whole company of players. From "Act I, scene 1," to the final curtain the children would spend several hours in Venice with its wicked Jew and its lovely Portia, or a midsummer night in the woods about Athens or in the Forest of Arden. "Hamlet," of course, was the piece most in demand. As he read the play, Dr. John would enact each character. One moment he was Hamlet, the next the ghost; then Ophelia would come on the stage, then the King and then Polonius. As he read, voice and intonation changed and his features were transformed into those of the part.

Thus for Walter Page the "Old Place" embodied the deepest things of life. If we seek the origin of the ideas that shaped his career, we must return to this somewhat weather-beaten Southern home. Page's father had given him his conception of American history as the evolution of a nation and not as the disintegrated growth of separate States — and this lesson was strengthened by the family homestead. Here Walter learned that not only the South, but the North, had played a great part in creating this same nation, and that the Yankee was not merely a queer creature who spent the years of peace peddling notions and the years of war ravaging Southern homes and burning Southern cities, but a man who had certain claims to an

intellectual endowment, and a part in American progress. Here he also learned to put his Southern viewpoint in an accurate perspective, giving his admiration to the great souls of the revolutionary and formative era rather than to their successors whose policies had caused the greatest war, up till that time, in history. The "Old Place," that is, emphasizing the influences of his own home, gave direction to Page's entire life. Here also Walter's love of literature, especially the literature of Shakespeare, took deeper root. The important fact is that these ideas and these emotions became the bedrock of his nature while he was still a child — before he had reached his fifteenth year. After 1870, when Page left home for his mere book education, he saw little of the "Old Place." Yet its memories and its lessons were always present. Its cedars, its oaks, its arched driveway, the old man with his pipe, the faithful Primus at his side, the Uncle declaiming the Shakespeare plays, the discussions of religion and of the war — these things formed the imagery of Page's matured views on Southern life. These associations also gave the romantic stuff of his early dreams. To them, in after life, his mind constantly returned. Especially did his horseback rides to his grandfather's leave their spell. "Most of the way," he wrote, "lay through woodland. The cabins that stood there were lighted chiefly by pine knots, which gave a cheerful glow, and a dog now and then ran out and barked till I was beyond its hearing. Now and then, too, a hog would run from a fence corner with a sudden grunt which startled me to tighten my grip on the reins. It was a beautiful night with moonlight shadows of pines across the road and with dense, dark places here and there through which I galloped. It is just as well to pass deep shadows as fast as you can — not from fear, of course, but because we are children of light. The night and the earth and the pine

forest — when you come in direct contact with all these at once, you feel yourself akin to fundamental things, especially if you are a boy and your alert imagination is quickened by every sound and perfume. And you will carry the odour of the earth and of the trees in your memory at whatever distance you may live from them. Go into the woods a night now, if you are old, and you will be likely to recall a night and a wood that gave forth the same odours half a century ago; and you may even conjure up some particular night and recall with distinctness all that happened then. You may call back old friends that you had half forgotten; for the memory of those whose childhood was spent on the soil likes to make its return circuit on the ground."

Neither did the "Old Place" and it inhabitants, especially its negroes, forget Page. "Little grandfather," who, in the days of slavery, had ruled his domain with the gentlest of sceptres, attempted, after the war, to help his emancipated "servants" to a new life. Nearly all of them returned to the plantation after Appomattox, bewildered, as were most negroes, by their suddenly acquired freedom and not knowing what use to make of it. After Anderson's death, small plots of the land they had cultivated as slaves were sold, on easy payments, to these faithful retainers. A year or two after the old man died, Walter Page was living in Raleigh editing a newspaper. One day he was gathered in a large crowd at the State Capitol. Suddenly he became aware of a commotion at a considerable distance. Evidently some one was forcing his way through the mass against a general protest. "Ah wants ter see Marse Walter" — he could hear an old familiar negro voice muttering this over and over again. "Marse Walter, he wants ter see me too," it said. At last from the crowd an old battered negro emerged. His hair

was white, his clothes hung in rags about his bent form, and on his feet and legs he had tied bundles of straw in place of shoes. In his clenched hand he apparently held some precious possession. The old man, spying Page, cried, "Hello, Marse Walter," hobbled up to him and handed him a small roll of bills. It was Primus, Anderson's inseparable companion and servant, and the money was his last payment on the plot of land he had bought after his old master's death.

Much as the house itself remained in Page's mind, it was the old man himself that he chiefly liked to recall. Not the least remarkable aspect of Anderson was his physical vigour and independence. One day — he had passed his ninetieth year — his grandson attempted to help him into a carriage. The old man was fairly in when he felt the assisting hand; he promptly dismounted, faced the young man and said, almost angrily, "I can get into that buggy myself" — and did so. To the end he could read fine print without glasses, and had perfect hearing. One of Page's extant letters, written to his cousin, Miss Sarah Jasper, a frequent visitor to the Cary home, expresses the part that the old man and the old place held in his affections.

To Sarah Jasper

The Old Page Home, Wake Co., N.C.
Friday, 26 April 1878.

Dear Sarah:

. . . You do not know how this old place always works strangely on me, and every year more and more strange seems the effect of its loneliness. I have not been here before for nearly two years and that two years has brought

such changes! I have been trying to think all the morning just what it is that constitutes the charm. The old man that is here more than the old place and all its associations; for he makes both. He seems to speak to me back out of the far-gone forming elements that have made me. I have always been an especial favourite of his; strange, I think, but none the less true. He never has me confused in his mind, as he has many of his eighty grandchildren and great grandchildren, with any other one. Indeed, I seem always to have had, I fancy, a complete individuality of my own for the old man. I am not merely "Frank's boy," but Walter.

— Last night he and I had a long talk, about mules, wheat, the old piazza that is so fast losing its steady strength, about "Frank's mills" — everything in a word, and finally his own self. "I am beginning to feel myself failing, not at times but continually." There is a nameless pathos in him for me. And the old place here is bathed in it. The age-stained old walls, the worn-out old chairs, the quiet clocks, the aged andirons, the very chance-arranged old rose bushes in the garden, that are now in quaint red-yellow bloom, — the long straight cedars. The only place in the world where I could rest forever and never feel that I ought to be at work!

I am always made tenderer than is my wont by a day and night here.

W. H. P.

And Page wrote after the old man's death:

"It seemed to me that the history of the world fell into two periods — one that had gone before and the other that now began; for, when we buried him, we seemed to be burying a standard of judgment, a social order, an epoch."

CHAPTER II

SOUTHERN COLLEGE LIFE IN THE SEVENTIES

I

ONE Saturday afternoon in the autumn of 1871," writes Mr. J. D. Hodges,[1] of Mocksville, North Carolina, "I was in my room at Trinity College looking over my lessons for Monday. I heard inordinate laughter on the streets. I listened. I heard a boy say: 'He wouldn't take it. He fought like a tiger. He knocked one of the boys down.' I went to make inquiry. They said: 'A new boy came in a while ago and we tried to haze him, and he wouldn't have it.' When I was at Trinity there was no violent hazing. They would blindfold the new boy, make him walk on his all fours and with a clapboard spank him pretty vigorously. This they were trying to do to the new arrival.

"'Where is the new boy now?' I asked.

"'We left him down at Smoke Row' — a row of small rooms where the college boys lived. I found him leaning his shoulder against one of the piazza posts of 'Smoke Row.' His face was calm, smooth, but angry. I tried to engage him in conversation, but he was exceedingly reticent. He evidently didn't care to talk. He might have thought I was another hazer. However, he was usually quiet in his demeanour. That might have been the result of his studious habits. He was a fine student, especially in Greek. Years afterward, when he was editor of a paper in Raleigh, he would have me and another friend spend the night with him. He was then very jolly and full of life and apparently

[1] Personal communication to the author.

of hope. I was surprised at his lustiness, remembering his mildness at college."

This is our first glimpse of Walter Page taking his earliest steps in the higher education. A few days previously, two figures, wrapped in the shawls that formed part of the masculine attire of the period, reached the campus of Trinity College. The last five miles of the journey had lain through a wild and unkempt mountain country. Seated in a "buggy," driving a rather stodgy horse, the two adventurers in academe proceeded up hill and down, over roads almost impassable, lined alternately with forests of pine and oak, now and then skirting a small farm, frequently with a log cabin for a homestead. One of these figures was a huge man, the other a slender and somewhat awkward boy who had just turned his fifteenth year. Frank Page had accompanied Walter to take a preliminary view of Trinity, and, in case the place proved satisfactory, to settle him amid comfortable and seemly surroundings. A first view might have disheartened a man interested chiefly in the amenities of undergraduate life. Trinity College — the present richly endowed Duke University — was, in 1871, nothing but a gaunt, square brick building, much out of repair, surrounded by a scraggly lawn and a wooden fence. This structure consisted of a few lecture and classrooms and an assembly hall for chapel — all of them bearing marks of the struggle against poverty which had been Trinity's history for nearly forty years. There were no dormitories, the students "boarding round" in the private homes that made up the village of about three hundred inhabitants. Frank Page obtained quarters for Walter in a good Methodist family — the Alfords — who were his friends, and left for home.

The elder Page's cautious inspection would have seemed

rather unnecessary, for, if the boy was to attend college in North Carolina at that period, his choice was limited to Trinity. The University at Chapel Hill — the oldest of all State universities — was closed, a victim of the war and of reconstruction. Davidson, it is true, was open, but that was a Presbyterian institution, and not to be considered. A year or two after Page appeared at Trinity, however, a thin, tall, lantern-jawed Presbyterian youth knocked at the doors of Davidson — a young man whose name appeared in the college catalogue as Thomas Woodrow Wilson. The early academic surroundings of Wilson and Page therefore were almost the same; their first undergraduate years were spent in extremely immature denominational colleges in North Carolina — one Presbyterian, one Methodist. All these institutions, Trinity among them, were poverty-stricken to a degree that the present generation can scarcely understand. This was because they drew their support from a poverty-stricken and war-ruined country. And the destitution of Randolph County, the seat of Page's first *alma mater*, far antedated the war. It had never been much more than a wild, thinly settled country. It was a region of small farmers; slaves there had been almost unknown; the rustic population, for the most part Quakers, raised with their own hands their cotton and wheat. A redeeming quality, however, was its natural beauty — rolling hills, sparkling water courses, and a deep blue sky. Trinity College itself, when first built, was merely a log house, yet let it be recorded to its credit that its first mission was one sadly needed in the State — the training of school teachers. The history of all these Southern denominational colleges is a heartrending one — usually that of a strong and devout, if somewhat uncouth spirit at the head, with no money, almost no support even from his own church following, and little desire for educa-

tion among the flock. Trinity, both in its architecture and its spirit, bore the imprint of this kind of existence. It had fewer than one hundred and fifty students, a great number of whom — the sons of teachers and Confederate veterans, and novitiates for the ministry — paid no tuition; it had a president and three or four professors — each receiving a nominal salary of one thousand dollars a year, which was paid so irregularly that those were lucky who collected half the sum. The college had no endowment, and, at this period, its entire annual revenue seldom exceeded three thousand dollars. It gave greatest emphasis to Greek, Latin, and mathematics, yet here, as in the other sectarian colleges, religion ranked on a par with intellectual training, if not above it. "Revivals" took place every year as regularly as commencement, and to undergo the process known as "conversion" or "profession of faith" was even more important than to obtain "distinction" in the academic routine. Athletics cut practically no figure; in their place were the forensic performances of the two rival debating societies, where future American statesmen were trained in oratory and politics.

There is a particular interest attached to the scholastic experiences of Page's early life. Perhaps the most serious work of his maturity was done in education, especially education in the South. No man better understood its defects, for he had observed them at first hand — they had, indeed, furnished the background of his own existence. At that time the president of Trinity was a kind of rough and rural Dr. Arnold. This comparison with Dr. Arnold is not intended to imply delicacy of temperament and generations of culture — for these things Braxton Craven certainly did not possess; but he did have an insight into the lives of his students, and a personal devotion to the development of their minds, which are the essential quali-

ties of any great schoolmaster. His course represents the one not unusual in this country; that of a naturally apprehensive intelligence, expressing itself in surroundings, physical and spiritual, crude, undisciplined and even squalid. Craven's face and person suggested the agricultural type to which in truth he belonged. The high forehead, the straight nose, the deep-set, dark and piercing eyes, the thin lips, the brush of black hair, the chin whiskers, the tough and seasoned complexion, the large and powerful arms, the stout and sinewy legs, all bore the stamp, not of the cloistered student, but of the veracious autochthon of the soil. The manners of Braxton Craven were the manners of the backwoodsman. His throne room was a bare, scarcely furnished apartment; here he sat before a pine desk, his back to the wall, discussing college affairs with his callers, frequently busily writing during the interview, methodically pushing from cheek to cheek a cud of tobacco, now and then turning around to spit in the fireplace. Despite this discouraging first impression, at times Craven's person did not lack dignity. His great figure, clad in a black frock coat, his neck encircled by a turndown collar and a black cravat, his huge head crowned with an inevitable silk hat, gave a certain character to the Trinity prospect. He proceeded with a quick and vigorous stride, completely occupied with his thoughts; indeed, one of his most curious traits was his habit of walking in abstraction, never, by the slightest nod or glint of eye, recognizing professors, students, or townspeople. But this was only one familiar view. Another vision was that of the rough-clad toiler in the fields, directing the plough or wielding the scythe; for "Old Brack," as the students called him, was a practical dirt farmer, extracting his living, or most of it, from the soil with his own hands. At other times he could be seen in the blacksmith shop,

with leather apron, exposing grimy arms and the taut muscles of a prize-fighter, shoeing horses, mending carriage wheels, blowing the furnace with cheerful conviction, the sweat pouring down his cheeks — for this useful trade was also one of his accomplishments. Another time he could take his place in a sawmill, cutting logs, planing lumber, splitting "puncheons"; or in the carpenter shop, mending ploughs, making barrels — at which he was an adept — or spokes and shingles. There was practically no manual art, indeed, at which Dr. Craven did not excel; in his own person he illustrated that combination of hand and brain which to many represents the perfect education — an idea that Walter Page, himself, in after life, exploited; Craven could sit on the cobbler's bench and turn out a pair of serviceable shoes; he could mend a lock as readily as he could repair a piece of old harness or put together a harrow. He also ran a gristmill and kept a country store. But his mechanical skill was merely one part of the story; he practised the liberal professions as well. He was physician both to his school, and to the surrounding country. Whenever a Trinity boy fell ill, Braxton Craven immediately appeared at his bedside, applying poultices, administering medicines, and frequently nursing him through the night. Though he knew the law only from practice and personal study, he had its most important points at his fingers' ends; he wrote the wills of his fellow townsmen — and they always stood the test of the courts — drew deeds, and, better still, served as a kind of patriarchal umpire in disputes. As a mathematician and astronomer Craven was a natural genius; he calculated tides, eclipses, and other abstruse phenomena for an almanac published in Raleigh. Once his prediction of an eclipse fell short a few minutes of the time which the savants of the Smithsonian Institution had set; when the heavenly miracle

came to pass, however, the sun itself proved that Craven was right. He also surveyed lands, but the outside occupation in which he most delighted was that of Methodist pastor in the village church. He preached twice on Sundays, leading the congregational singing with a deep bass voice, held at least one resounding "revival" in the winter, engaged in acid disputes with his Conference, and occasionally, when other platform opportunities failed, started on the lecture circuit. He dallied also in polite literature, having to his credit two published novels, "Mary Barker" and "Naomi Wise, or the Wrongs of a Beautiful Girl (a true story)." He left a mass of manuscripts — sermons, lectures, articles, partly written textbooks — that was mountain high. He acted as a drill master in the Civil War and was also for a time the keeper of Salisbury Prison.

Probably Craven's greatest service was the constancy with which, year after year, he preached the necessity of primary education at public expense. Certainly that was his chief influence upon the growing mind of Walter Page. One of the reasons why Craven admired the North — an admiration he never concealed, even in the darkest period of the reconstruction era — was because that section years before had adopted the principle, unrecognized in the South, that the education of the child was the responsibility of the State. This was the goal which Craven held constantly before his pupils in a time when his voice was almost the only one speaking for a cause that afterward almost completely absorbed Page's mind. Craven's life not only illustrated the need — it even more eloquently pointed out the possibilities. All the rest of Page's days, indeed, his figure symbolized democracy in education.

So far as the mere academic side was concerned, the

fifteen months Page spent in this bleak community were not successful. The surroundings were too primitive and the associations, with the exception of two or three close friends, uncongenial. The time was especially critical, even for Trinity; attendance was falling off, the teaching staff could not collect their salaries, and Craven was engaging in a lively tussle with his "Conference." These circumstances necessarily produced a demoralizing atmosphere. Such schoolboy letters as survive — a few scraps — show Page's unhappiness and dissatisfaction. "I can't say yet that I like Trinity or that I love to think of returning here after Christmas," he wrote in the autumn of 1872, "but you said, I think, only stay this session, did you not, Papa?" "I read a little Latin and a little Greek, and don't learn any more about it than I already know." "I am studying quite hard now, though not textbooks particularly. I am reading." He went in strongly for debating and was assigned to represent his society at the "anniversary," the great oratorical event of the year. Extant reports indicate a generally good standing in his classes, though the Trinity Catalogue for 1872–73 has W. H. Page starred as "deficient in one or more studies." "My conduct and study during the last grade will forever keep me a third or second honour man," he writes in October, 1872. The tradition of Trinity to-day is that "Wat" Page and "Brack" Craven, two very strong-willed persons, clashed many times and that Page left as the result of a quarrel with the head. Probably the truth is that Page departed because he wished a more stimulating influence. The turning-point came in the late autumn of 1872, when the Reverend James A. Duncan, President of Randolph-Macon College, at Ashland, Virginia, came to Fayetteville. It was then the custom for the heads of denominational colleges to make visitations, which were

really attempts to drum up sadly needed students. Dr. Duncan was a preacher of force, and his address on this occasion — the subject was "Christian education" — caused a great excitement. As a result, three of the most prominent Trinitarians left the Craven institution and took up a new life at Randolph-Macon. One of them was "Wat" Page.

II

That the Virginia college should bear the name of Randolph-Macon in itself showed that Page had penetrated a new environment. John Randolph, the eccentric statesman of Roanoke, and Nathaniel Macon, his political associate, had no strain of Methodism in their intellectual outlook. Both men were Jeffersonian deists, or, to use the dreadful word then so general in rural areas, "infidels." Neither made any contribution to the college which bore their joint names or ever showed the slightest interest in its success. That the oldest Methodist college in the United States should have selected these two free-thinkers as patron saints may, or may not, indicate a tolerance of spirit not common among evangelical foundations; the fact remains that, though there was plenty of religion at Randolph-Macon in Page's day, it was much milder and less assertive than that at Trinity. Huxley was an author not unknown to professors and students, and two Bishops on the Board entertained views which, in these days, might be described as Modernism. The President, James A. Duncan, was a famous orator, full of fire and imagery, a deep searcher into souls, yet in person dignified, gentle, and persuasive. His great educational achievement consisted in assembling a faculty far superior in scholarship and enlivening quality to the average Southern standard. He did not dominate Randolph-Macon as Braxton Craven

The frame house in which Page roomed at Randolph-Macon, and Franklin Hall, the society building in which he gained experience as a debater

dominated Trinity; there were other forces at work, and under their influence Page immediately fell. The mere fact that the college was established at Ashland, sixteen miles north of Richmond, in the tidewater section of Virginia, perhaps explains the finer atmosphere that encompassed it. Yet Dr. Duncan's college had suffered tribulations almost as great as Dr. Craven's; its buildings, in January, 1873, when Page arrived, were almost as unkempt, its financial condition almost as desperate. Yet its struggles had not produced an air of depression; life was full of energy and interest; from the day Page entered he was happy and contented. The man who left Randolph-Macon in 1876 was a very different person from the seventeen-year-old boy who had entered in January, 1873.

To Page in this quiet Virginia town came one of the deepest of human experiences — a close and abiding friendship. Several men lived at Randolph-Macon who afterward made their mark — Richard Bierne, who went to Congress soon after graduation and later became editor of the leading newspaper in Richmond; W. M. Baskervill, afterward one of the strongest pillars of Vanderbilt University; Robert E. Blackwell, at an early age made president of Randolph-Macon; and Wilbur F. Tillett, professor at Vanderbilt and dean of its theological faculty. There was another for whom a successful life was generally foretold, but who died too early even to make a start. This was John B. Wardlaw — "My Jack" Page calls him. These men naturally made a group; after the day's college work they would commonly gather in Page's room for conversation and argument — college life, literature, religion, politics, with special concentration on the reconstruction orgy taking place around them, and that inevitable topic, the future! — or, in late afternoon or twilight they would walk in the surrounding country.

In a college letter, Page recalls how, on one of these excursions to Hanover Court House, he boldly cut his initials on an oak tree, directly under a still visible inscription, "H. C." — for here Henry Clay had been born and had spent his early initial-carving boyhood. It was with a little chosen group like this that Page, then and afterward, was most at home; he never avoided company — indeed, his willingness to discuss almost any subject with the latest comer was a persistent trait — yet he had a genius for close personal intimacies. The memory of these famous Maison Carré-ans — so they were called from the Maison Carré in which they lived — still lingers in Ashland. Besides conversation, they were adept at song: "John Brown's Body," "Old Grimes," and other popular war ditties commonly came from their windows on summer evenings. Page made another contribution; he loved to recite from his favourite poets, and crowds would sometimes gather outside to catch the rolling accents of "Break! Break! Break!" and "Locksley Hall" — for Tennyson was at this period his absorbing literary interest. The tenacity with which Page held his political views at times convinced his friends that his proper field, after all, was politics. Page had his other moods, too. The crowd boarded at Mrs. Irby's and Walter had not long been here before he found himself engaged in a sentimental affair with his landlady's daughter, the pretty Miss Fannie. Evidently the emotion was not exclusive, for there were also pleasant evenings at Mrs. Carroll's, whose two daughters — Miss Virginia and Miss Mary, the latter the belle of Ashland — remained good friends through the subsequent years.

Page was eclectic in his choice of roommates. They ranged from Wilbur Tillett, distinguished for scholarship and a profound interest in religion, to a certain son of the

Old Dominion, who divided his time between a passion for the Greek classics and the wassail bowl. Page had no inclination for personal riot, but he had a strong affection for this cheery and careless spirit, who was a young man of talent and ingratiating charm; one of the enduring images of Page held by his classmates is the solicitude with which he would pilot his unsteady roommate home and the tenderness with which he would put him to bed. Indeed, Page's unsuccessful attempts to win his companion from these bibulous courses furnished the one unhappy note to his life at Ashland. Of all his roommates, however, the one that had the deepest hold upon his heart and who exercised the most lasting influence upon his mind was Jack Wardlaw. Wardlaw was part of Page's education. The relationship was one of those rarest of all things in this world — the perfect friendship of a man for a man. "It was the finest exemplification of a noble friendship I have ever known," writes the Reverend A. G. Wardlaw,[1] the surviving brother of Jack. To find anything comparable with it one must search literary history; possible parallels are the friendship that existed between Arthur Hallam and Tennyson, or, in a more remote time, between Etienne de la Boëtie and Montaigne. As in both these instances, Page and Wardlaw's friendship was that of two young men, one of whom died at an early age; it was a friendship also not only of the heart but of the mind, and it was inextricably associated with the deeper matters of life — with religion, books, citizenship, and love of country. Its real foundation, of course, was the ever-present feeling of easy and affectionate comradeship — the indefinable something which Montaigne, in attempting to explain the motives of his almost mystical attachment to his friend, has come nearer than any one else to describing: "Because it was he,

[1] Personal communication to the author.

because it was I." Wardlaw himself, in a letter to Page, set forth finely the unity of soul that held the two men together. "I count our spiritual alliance a steadfast fact, one of the best manifestations of Providence's interest in my destiny. So know always, Wat, whatever befall, that I am deeply true to us."

The religious feeling displayed in this tribute was the ever-present influence in Wardlaw's life. The son of a Methodist clergyman, he had himself been dedicated to the ministry from his birth. Yet the evangelical atmosphere in which he had been bred was, a year or two after his friendship with Page began, no longer a part of his nature. Page himself, though he started life an orthodox Wesleyan, had also felt the spell of the new ideas then gaining ascendancy. The struggle between Modernism and religious orthodoxy, so-called, was almost as vigorous in the seventies as it is to-day. The vital question posed to every young man making his first acquaintance with exact knowledge was the effect these issues were to have upon the Christian teachings of his childhood. Even in a little Methodist college, in the troublous years following the Civil War, this eternal query could not be avoided. A period of doubt and spiritual wrestling was then part of a normal young man's education; and in Page's case this era was intimately associated with his friendship for Jack Wardlaw. It was woven deeply also in the books the two men read. Depreciation of Tennyson and the other great Victorians is the present literary fashion; yet it must be confessed that Page was a fervid Tennysonian, and that, in this crisis, his favourite poet was almost as ever-present a person as his classmate. The book that the two seekers constantly read and discussed was "In Memoriam." There is little comprehension to-day of the vast hold this poem maintained over sincere and cultivated

Walter Page at Randolph-Macon (1873–1876) with his two closest friends, Wilbur F. Tillett and John Banks Wardlaw (standing)

minds in the seventies. The great epic of religious doubt — published only a few years before the "Origin of Species" — had come to a world vexed between the primitive absurdities of a traditional creed and an instinctive yearning for a genuine religious faith. The struggles it portrayed were the struggles through which most serious men and women were passing; and that these struggles, in the poet's soul, had ended in a belief in God and immortality, made "In Memoriam" the great consolation of the naturally devout mind. To read the few surviving scraps of the correspondence of Walter Page and Wardlaw takes one back again to this almost forgotten chapter in nineteenth-century literature. It is a picture of two honest and mentally active boys, both nurtured in a world of rigid Methodism, with all the limitation of thought that such a training implies, groping upward along the path of enlightenment, attempting to think for themselves, yet seeking a satisfying compromise between the hopes and doubts that alternately possessed them. And the book that furnished the best answer was Tennyson's masterpiece. That the poem not only discussed faith and doubt and immortality, but did so as part of the celebration of a great friendship, gave it a particular meaning to these young men. "More than anything that I know of," Wardlaw wrote Page, "I rest content with that helpful influence and spiritual inspiration that somehow grew out of our association."

Probably "In Memoriam" supplied a more consoling answer to Wardlaw than to Page, whose mind, more robust if not more brilliant, ultimately found little satisfaction in the rather morbid anatomizing of religious doubt which was the intellectual occupation of the time. Significantly, Wardlaw's last gift to "Wat" — a gift from his deathbed — was his copy of Matthew Arnold; by this time "Litera-

ture and Dogma," rather than "In Memoriam," reflected Page's attitude toward religion. On another more immediate and mundane theme the two young men were at one. Wardlaw was an important influence in the political emancipation of Page. The Randolph-Macon period was not one that would create a friendly feeling toward the Federal Government. Reconstruction was at work in its most obnoxious form. North Carolina suffered especially from the efforts of the Republican politicians to make good Republican States of the commonwealths "lately in rebellion," using as a nucleus the negro vote. "Scalawags" and "carpet-baggers" and their coloured accomplices were dominating legislatures, plundering public treasuries and making daily existence a horror for the white citizenry. Naturally these transactions filled a large space in college discussions. Both Wardlaw and Page took a more dispassionate view of the national outlook than most of their fellows. Their horizon was becoming general rather than sectional. Both were beginning to study the early history of their country, to learn the part the South had played in organizing the nation, and the extent to which, in more recent years, it had lost its leadership. Young as they were, the likelihood that their region might again play a great part was a constant theme of conversation. "We had the deep seriousness as well as the blythe spirit of youth," said Page, writing of these times. "One night we sat talking of patriotism, as we talked many nights, and of our duty to our country. True, we did not know the political events of the year, nor even of that decade. We lived far from the world where such stirring things were going on. But we did know that the South was a discredited province of the Union, that its voice was not now heard, that its influence was gone and that we were disinherited children of the Republic which our

fathers had framed. We were reading Jefferson and Madison as a diversion — the kind of diversion that is one's main matter of life. There were now no Southern men of corresponding influence. But there should be more such and the old land should know that it had not become barren."

Certain happenings at Randolph-Macon itself had turned their minds to this great subject. Southern chauvinism was not an active force in Ashland. Both faculty and students, despite the discouraging events taking place, were beginning to revise their opinions about the Civil War. The prevailing spirit was shown by the invitation extended in 1875 to John Hampden Chamberlayne to deliver an address before the Washington Literary Society. Mr. Chamberlayne, who was an alumnus of the University of Virginia and the editor of an influential Richmond newspaper, *The State*, had served as a captain of artillery in the Confederate army. Yet he entertained and expressed emphatic views on the relations of the North and the South, and on this Randolph-Macon occasion he set them forth with an energy that produced a lasting result on many growing minds. He enjoined the boys to think for themselves, not to become mere worshippers of tradition, not to let "things," as he expressed it — adopting the Emersonian phrase — "get into the saddle." One of the "things" especially destructive was the Southern point of view on slavery and the Civil War. Chamberlayne begged the Southern boys he was addressing not to be led astray by such a misconception. Since 1830, he said, the South had really ceased to do much thinking. It had produced no books to which the rest of the world had paid any attention. Yet it was even then warped by self-satisfaction. He ridiculed the idea that there were no Americans of importance living north of the Potomac. This, he said, was

merely Virginian provincialism and ignorance. This Confederate artilleryman aimed his guns at what he regarded as another prevailing idea — the Southern belief that the Northern armies in the Civil War were composed of barbarians. Never, he declared, had a more civilized war been fought. Both sides were completely scrupulous in observing the rules. From the standpoint of humanity nothing like it had been known in history; the speaker compared it, from this view, with the Franco-Prussian War, which was then fresh in everybody's mind. He even spoke a word for a man whose name is still detested in the South — General Sherman — declaring that his great march, far from being cruel, was an errand of mercy compared with many of Napoleon's campaigns. The conviction that the North had no argument on its side in its opposition to slavery was another ghost which Mr. Chamberlayne sought to lay.

His general purpose, on this and other occasions, was to sow certain fruitful ideas in the minds of educated Southerners and thus to create the basis of a new life for the South. He insisted that the South should cease "fondly turning back to the mythic beauties of a mythic past" and face the sunrise. The speech certainly had this effect at Randolph-Macon. Coming at a time when the Southern States were still nourishing the unhealed wounds of the Civil War, it produced an academic sensation. For weeks students and faculty discussed little else, and the weight of opinion turned in favour of the new view. It had an especially far-reaching effect upon Wardlaw and Page — one twenty years old, the other nineteen. The desire to do something constructive for the South now became the settled purpose of both young men. They talked the matter over on all occasions — before the fire in the evening and on long walks in the surrounding hills.

The memory of these interchanges remained a part of Page's mental life to the end. He turned naturally to them in a speech made in April, 1904, at Birmingham, Alabama, before the Southern Education Board, the theme of which was essentially the same as the topic he had so constantly discussed with Jack Wardlaw thirty years before. "Lost our ambition?" he said. "I had a friend, when we were just coming into active life, a Georgian of gentle breeding and of high spirit — ardent and eloquent. There are other men here who knew him and loved him, for he has now long been dead. The last sad Christmas of his life I went a long journey to see him. One evening at sunset he looked out of the window over the gullied fields (it was an endless waste of mistilled land) and he said to his mother and me: 'I love the old, red hills and we must show that men live on them yet.' A hint of death was already in his eyes, but an unbounded patriotism shone there too. He wrote me a little later: 'I do not mind dying, but I hoped to do something for the South before I went.' And he never wrote again. Our ambition is as great as his was, and — let us hope — as unselfish too. But even yet it is an unfulfilled ambition." [1]

Wardlaw left Randolph-Macon at the end of his junior year, and entered Princeton, from which he took his degree in 1877. Here he had a brilliant undergraduate career, distinguished mainly for his talents as a writer and public speaker. He enjoys a kind of Princeton immortality as one of the founders of the *Princetonian*. Here Page, a student at Johns Hopkins, occasionally visited him, and correspondence between the two men was unremitting.[2] His last years were full of sadness. He married soon after leaving Princeton, but his wife was killed in an accident within the year. Grief over her loss, wreaking itself on

[1] Speech by W. H. Page, at the seventh Conference for Education in the South, April, 1904, "The Unfulfilled Ambition of the South."

[2] The letters, like most of Page's early letters, have unfortunately disappeared.

a frame which had never been robust, caused Wardlaw's death a few months afterward. Page, in the extract quoted above, describes his last visit to his stricken friend. His written tribute at the time, published in the *Literary World* of Boston, shows again that one of Wardlaw's main contributions to his own growth was this desire to start the South upon a new day. "Having attained one maturity and already venerable with ruins," wrote Page, "the South renews its youth and unshackled enters the race of nations. John Banks Wardlaw was of that youth, yet sprung from the strength of centuries.

"In the air of this sunny land he saw streaks of the coming dawn. In murmurs of the sea and the mountains he heard intimations of unborn songs. He lived in a day that is not yet come, a fulfillment of his own prophecy. Through the struggles that weary us to blindness he saw achievement.

"Woe to us who nevermore shall catch his inspiration! Peace, pure as his own soul, enshroud him in his 'Westminster of the mountains!'" [1]

III

An influence of a contrary kind came from the man on the teaching force who contributed most to Page's literary progress during these eventful four years. Thomas Randolph Price, Professor of Greek and English, was a Virginian, with all the meaning then attached to that proud name. Price would probably have repudiated the suggestion that he was an American — except in the formal sense. When Page first met him he was only thirty-four; his erect, dashing figure, his black hair and eyes, his quick, searching glance, his defiant head and his clear-cut face, accorded well with the romantic life story that in itself

[1] Wardlaw died at Christiansburg, Virginia, in the Allegheny Mountains.

Thomas Randolph Price (1839–1903), Professor of Greek and English at Randolph-Macon, to whom Page chiefly owed his love of English literature

gave a touch of imagination to Page's career at Ashland. That "typical Southerners" were not particularly numerous is a point already made; yet it must be admitted that Price himself belonged to this rapidly vanishing breed. All the chivalry and gallantry — all the reverence for women and the high feeling of honour among men — that are attributed to the Virginia gentleman gave charm and dignity to Price's every act and word. Gibbon, with his stately periods and leisurely march through the ages, was his favourite historian; "He wrote for gentlemen," Price would say; the more tempestuous and colourful Macaulay, on the other hand, irritated his sense of literary decorum. His nature, indeed, was a stimulating mingling of fire and shyness, of love and hate, just as his conversation was a mixture of epigram, sympathetic confidence, and intelligent insight. Life for Price thus was a matter of emotion rather than of intellect. He was conscious of this and liked to repeat the wise saying of Balzac in his "Woman of Thirty": "To reason when one should be guided by his feelings is the peculiar province of narrow minds." He exemplified this saying in the great loyalty of his own life. Though he spent his last twenty years in the North, as Professor of English at Columbia University, New York, Price never became reconciled to the defeat of the Southern cause. He was a Virginia cavalry officer for three years in the Civil War, and he remained a Virginia cavalry officer to the end. The most dreadful day of his life was the one when he was sent to Jefferson Davis by General Breckinridge to announce the necessity of Lee's surrender — and the time never came when that memory ceased to be a pang. He was never bitter, he had a host of Northern friends whom he loved, he was honoured by one of the greatest of Northern universities, yet he was too genuine to pretend to a reconcilement which he did not feel. The

fact is that Price, with his steadfast, impulsive, romantic nature, was the ideal devotee of lost causes; loyalty was a virtue that he loved for its own sake. This, too, Price understood, and in discussing his attitude toward the Confederacy he would always repeat the Latin verse:

Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.[1]

This line would usually come at the close of his relation of his own war experiences. Educated at the University of Virginia, a pupil of the youthful Gildersleeve, he afterward spent two years studying Greek in Europe — at Kiel, where he became not only the pupil but the friend of George Curtius, remaining his correspondent through life; at Athens, where he learned to speak modern Greek; and at Paris, where he was working for his doctorate when the guns of Fort Sumter called him back to Virginia. In London he had his plans made to slip into the United States as a Greek immigrant, but he met by chance John Wilkinson, the famous blockade runner, who offered to take him to Wilmington on his privateer, the Giraffe. The story of the famous entry into the Cape Fear River on Christmas Eve, 1862 — the grounding of the vessel on a sand bar with a crescent of Federal blockading ships within gunshot, Price himself standing over the reluctant engineer with a pistol — frequently entertained a group of favourite students in the professor's rooms. The war over, Price sought consolation in the ancient writers and in the society of his favourite mentor, Gildersleeve.

One day, in the Greek class, Price called upon Page to read a chorus of Sophocles. Sophocles was Price's favourite among the Greek tragedians, as Plato was his favourite among the philosophers. Page read the passage with such

[1] The victorious cause is pleasing to the gods, but the lost cause is pleasing to Cato.

an exquisite pronunciation of the Greek, such a fine response to its rhythm, and such a clear insight into the meaning of every syllable, that Price was entranced. From that moment, the young man from Cary held a preferred position in Price's affections. Against one of Page's earliest reports, still extant, appear the words, written in Price's microscopic script: "A young scholar of extraordinary promise." Upon appreciative students like this Price lavished his instruction. He was not a teacher for the general; the average college boy's insensitiveness to the glory of the classics was a perpetual barb in his soul; the slightest sign of enlightenment, however, immediately produced an accordant throb; and the grace and understanding with which Page repeated the sweet verses of Antigone made Price his friend for life. For such spirits he reserved especial consideration. He liked to invite them to his own study for afternoon tea, or for Sunday evening supper, and engage them in what was even then becoming a lost art — conversation. The Greek masterpieces — as well as the great works of other literature — were read for everything that was in them — their music, their philosophy, their picture of Greek manners and Greek character, and the light they shed upon the spirit of man in surroundings so different from our own. There was nothing professorial in Price's behaviour on such occasions; as George Woodberry, afterward his colleague at Columbia, said, "he had the faculty of making learning a social thing"; he treated his disciples as equals, and, in addition to scholarship, there was much wit and fun, excursions into politics and history, and verbal dissipations that amounted to mere chit-chat. "What veritable *noctes ambrosianæ* in the early 70's!" writes one of his pupils.[1] "What talk over countless

[1] Address of W. Gordon McCabe, accepting the gift of the Thomas Randolph Price Memorial Library for the University of Virginia, November 19, 1904.

pipes — for we all belonged to Charles Lamb's 'blest tobacco boys,' and were too poor then to smoke cigars — what talk, I say, far into the night, ranging from 'Tom Jones' to 'Plato,' from Horatian syntax to Browning's 'Balaustion.'" "There were four or five of us," wrote Walter Page himself, "whom he won and who would have gone to war for him if need be. He had won us by his simple, superb enthusiasm. He conducted his class wholly with reference to us four or five. I think that he was often unaware of the existence of the others. We who loved him spent much time at his simple table and in his library. We read the Greek orations with him in this way and the great tragedies. Thus it happened that we had a great teacher, a rare spirit, and a man of ennobling culture, a gentleman, moreover, if the round earth held one."

Above everything else Price stood for one supreme idea in Education, and it was an idea that intimately guided Page's mental growth, and, indeed, controlled his subsequent career. Profound classicist that he was, one subject Price ranked above the study of the ancient world; abiding as was his reverence for Sophocles and Plato, there was one writer who entered deeper into his being. The greatest of all languages was English; the author who overtopped all his predecessors was Shakespeare. "No man can go to heaven who does not use good English," was his genial way of expressing his dominating conviction. "Read good books; study the great masters of English," was the sentiment he ding-donged into the minds of his students. At that time English and English literature were neglected studies, both in the United States and in Great Britain. Greek, Latin, and mathematics formed the accepted trinity on both sides of the Atlantic. Half-hearted attempts were indeed made, here and there, to ground American boys in their inherited speech, but no-

where did the subject stand on the same plane with the dead languages. Price represented a new conception; he would not abandon Greek for the benefit of English, or English for the benefit of Greek; he regarded the two tongues and the literature they embodied as man's greatest intellectual achievements; he insisted that they should be the basis of education, that they should be taught side by side, that the cultivated man should find himself easily at home in both, going, by the most natural transition, from the age of Elizabeth to the age of Pericles. And intensive training in both languages and literatures he made his highest purpose at Randolph-Macon. To him, more than to any other man, Page owed his interest in the English language and his lifelong devotion to the great English classics. That love of Tennyson and Shakespeare which from now on rules uppermost in Page's literary affections, was undoubtedly acquired from Price. "I would cross the Atlantic only to look at Tennyson's face," wrote Price, "and see before he passes away the eyes that have pierced deeper into the subtleties and powers of our language than any other eyes since Shakespeare's." [1] The part that Tennyson must have played in these "ambrosial nights" is apparent.

And Price taught Page to love not only the English language and English literature; above all he taught him to love England itself. Years afterward, when this particular pupil became Ambassador to Great Britain, his admiration for England informed all his speeches, his letters and his interpretation of great events. Certain shallow critics pretended to believe that this was a suddenly acquired affection, the result of that subtle flattery which is supposed to be one of the most successfully practiced

[1] "Memories and Memorials of William Gordon McCabe," by Armistead C. Gordon, vol. II, p. 274.

arts in the British Isles. Whatever opinions one may hold of Page's belief that the coöperation of the English-speaking nations was, above everything else, essential to human progress — at least one fact is clear: it was no improvised conviction. If one seeks its origin, it is necessary to go much farther back than the London of 1914; one must return to this quiet little Virginia village of the early eighteen-seventies, and picture there a slender, rather lanky, curly-haired boy of eighteen, spending many an afternoon in confidential companionship with an erect and scholarly soldier of the Confederacy, who day after day filled his plastic mind with the greatness of England's writers, thinkers, and statesmen. For this, after all, was Price's most important lesson. In a certain sense, it must be admitted, his love of England was an expression of his narrow side. To him Virginia was his "native country," and England his "mother" land. English literature to him meant writing produced in England. For American authors he had a lack of sympathy that, viewed in the larger outlook of to-day, was a limitation. Most eminent American authors up to that time were Northerners — Yankees: Hawthorne, Emerson, Irving, Longfellow, Whitman, Lowell, Motley, Prescott, Whittier, Thoreau — names that to Price were associated closely with the national cause to which he had never become reconciled. The cavalier manner in which Price dismissed them all was merely a reflection — mistaken, narrow-minded if you will — of his intense loyalty to the Southern cause. In this he was so unreasoning that, as Page himself afterward recalled, with an amusement that did not detract from his tolerant affection, "his patriotism and love of Greek literature were so linked together in his mind that he would never believe that any 'Northern' scholar really knew his Greek." But Page did not suffer in national feeling from

Price's instruction. He had no difficulty in absorbing his teacher's admiration for England, simultaneously with "Ham" Chamberlayne's new attitude toward that even more distant nation lying north of the Potomac.

Thus, Walter Page's three years at Randolph-Macon was a rich experience. That he took many scholastic honours — the Walton prize in Greek, the Sutherlin medal in oratory — was less important than that here he made a close association with two or three men who gave him a glimpse into lands that he had previously seen only vaguely. And Price's admiration for the North Carolina boy had another consequence. In January of 1876, Professor Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve resigned the Greek Chair at the University of Virginia to accept the Greek Chair at the new Johns Hopkins University. On Gildersleeve's recommendation, Professor Price succeeded him at Charlottesville. Gildersleeve was scanning American colleges and universities to discover four or five young men for fellowships at Hopkins in his own field. Price suggested Page. An appointment to one of the first twenty fellowships at Johns Hopkins was the greatest academic honour of the time. Price's recommendation, and written evidences of his attainments, secured Page one of the posts, and thus, in the autumn of centennial year, he found himself installed in Baltimore under the direct tutelage of America's profoundest Greek scholar.

CHAPTER III

"SAINT BASIL OF BALTIMORE"

I

THE intellectual and spiritual history of most men," said Basil L. Gildersleeve, "is to be found in the succession of their teachers." No life better exemplifies his meaning than his own. No American career more eloquently illustrates the influence of great teachers than that of Walter Page. Many times in after life he expressed his obligations to his two years spent in Baltimore. "It is especially bitter," he wrote Daniel Coit Gilman in 1900, referring to Dr. Gilman's resignation of the Presidency of Johns Hopkins, "to men like me, who, coming out of a poor southern community twenty-five years ago, might never have got a wide view of the great world and of the great things in it in proper coördination but for the help that the university gave us. Great as our needs and disadvantages were, greater yet and generous was the university's service to us. I can never recall my poor experience except with gratitude."

One of Page's associates, Dr. Henry Sewall,[1] retains a memory of Page at the opening of Johns Hopkins. President Gilman had assembled his twenty Fellows in Hopkins Hall for a few preliminary words of greeting.

"Young gentlemen, we give you a most hearty welcome here," he said. "The President and Trustees of the Johns Hopkins University are establishing here a temple of learning and upon its altar we shall light the sacred flame. We conceive it to be our duty, as it is our pleasure, to assist you with all facilities, counsel and friendly aid. We

[1] At present Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Colorado.

Hopkins Hall in 1876, which Page entered, in the autumn of that year, as one of the first twenty Fellows of Johns Hopkins University

conceive it to be the duty of each Fellow to light his own torch at the altar flame and to maintain it burning as brightly as possible so long as he shall live."

It was a greeting that the assembled students never forgot. "In that small gathering," writes Dr. Sewall,[1] "there sat next to me a lithe and vital young man, slender of build and rather pale of face, who was evidently rapt in interest with what Mr. Gilman was saying. And when the talk closed, my neighbour, with an alertness that still remains alive after forty-seven years, with a vivid and shining face, turned to me and said, 'Isn't he splendid!' I see him now."

It is not surprising that President Gilman's words should have moved so impressionable a boy as Page. They were calling him to a life different from any he had previously known. Nothing like Johns Hopkins University, in fact, had hitherto existed in America. To find anything resembling it we must go as far back as 1535 when Francis I founded the Collège de France — an institution that, for its first hundred years, had no buildings, but consisted of half a dozen professors and a small group of students. From the start this had been President Gilman's idea. Education in its highest form, he believed, was, first of all, the students' intimate contact with the minds of a few great scholars. Unlike the present day insistence on education as a practical matter, the Gilman ideal stood for the intellectual life as an end in itself. Even in 1876 — though not to the same degree as to-day — American colleges took great pride in material things. The aim of the new Johns Hopkins was to emphasize the "things of the mind." Its purpose was well expressed by Thomas H. Huxley, who came to Baltimore to deliver the inaugural address. The large sums of money spent upon college buildings, and the

[1] Personal communication to the author.

comparatively small amount invested in brains, had grieved him for years. On this same trip Huxley spent a few days at Yale to visit his friend Professor Marsh and inspect his famous collection of fossils. Professor Marsh at once sought to display the college buildings. "No," said Huxley, "show me what you have got inside of them. I can see plenty of bricks and mortar in my own country." Huxley expressed the same conviction in his Johns Hopkins inaugural. The fact that the new university consisted chiefly of a few professors and less than a hundred students delighted him. Page was present on this occasion and necessarily Huxley's words found lodgment in his mind. "I cannot say," remarked the speaker, referring, of course, to the American continent, "that I am in the slightest degree impressed by your bigness or your material resources, as such. Size is not grandeur, territory does not make a nation. The great issue, about which hangs a true sublimity and the terror of overhanging fate is, what are you going to do with all these things? The one condition of success, your sole safeguard, is the moral worth and intellectual clearness of the individual citizen. Education cannot give these, but it can cherish them and bring them to the front in whatever station of society they are to be found, and the universities ought to be, and may be, the fortress of the higher life of the nation." "It has been my fate to see great educational funds fossilize into mere bricks and mortar, in the petrifying springs of architecture, with nothing left to work the institution they were intended to support. A great warrior is said to have made a desert and called it peace. Administrators of educational funds have sometimes made a palace and called it a university."

The mere fact that Huxley was invited to grace this occasion suggests the new intellectual surroundings in which Page found himself. This, the great "Modernist"

of that day — the foremost interpreter of Darwin and the man whom the orthodox persisted in regarding as the most implacable foe of revealed religion — gave quite a different invocation from the one that was usual on such solemn festivals. A long way, this, from Trinity, and even from Randolph-Macon, or indeed from the spirit that generally controlled American colleges fifty years ago. But there was something more revolutionary. No clergyman was present to make an opening prayer. "We had sown the wind and were about to reap the whirlwind," wrote Dr. Gilman, many years afterward, referring to this episode. "Huxley was bad enough: Huxley without prayer was intolerable. As one Presbyterian Minister wrote, 'It was bad enough to invite Huxley. It were better to have asked God to be present. It would have been absurd to ask them both.' . . . It was several years before the black eye regained its natural colour." Page himself was a little disturbed. He was only twenty-one and the influence of his early religious training was strong. "There has been, as you have doubtless seen," he wrote to his cousin, Sarah Jasper, October 15, 1876, "a very great outcry against the godlessness of Johns Hopkins because there was no prayer offered when Professor Huxley opened the year's course of lectures. I'm sorry too. For whatever be the peculiar religious views that I may have, what is objectionable to my friends will be attributed to my connection with the university. The truth is, of course, there are here no religious influences pro or con. Among the forty-nine on the staff of instructors there are men of piety, men of morality simply — Jews, Catholics, and, I suspect, also atheists. But this must be so from the very nature of the institution."

Despite the lack of prayer, Huxley's words were noble ones, and might well have served as a call to a young man

whose purposes in life were already taking the shape of good citizenship and the use of intellectual equipment for public ends. The great Puritan poet defined religion as exclusively a matter of spirit — "before all temples the upright heart and pure" — and Johns Hopkins University insisted that in education mind was the one essential. Architecturally the place was less imposing than the little Virginia college that Page had just left. Two old dwelling-houses on North Howard Street, sitting back from the pavement, had been hastily thrown together and reconstructed into offices and lecture and seminary rooms; a little grass plot in front, ornamented with flowers and a sycamore tree, gave the only suggestion of a college "campus." There were, of course, no dormitories; the students "boarded round" in Baltimore; and the usual attributes of academic life in America — athletics, secret societies, cane rushes, college "yells," "promenades," and the like — played no part. As Page said in one of his early letters, the purpose of the place was "work, work, work." The fact is that Johns Hopkins represented the first attempt to found a real university in this country. In a way its establishment marked a break with America's educational past. For more than two centuries American colleges, in the emphasis they placed upon the "humanities" rather than upon minute scholarship, had followed the English model. But for many years Germany had been gaining an ascendancy. The procession of American students to the Fatherland had begun in the years just preceding the Civil War, and had gained increased momentum in the years following it. The German doctorate of philosophy represented the highest goal of the aspiring American student. Every European steamer carried young men across the ocean zealously seeking this scholastic Holy Grail. German accuracy, German thoroughness, German

insistence on the most microscopic investigation, exercised a spell on the American mind. And this ideal, as Page promptly discovered, had now taken up its headquarters in Baltimore. The business of Johns Hopkins was not only to absorb the culture of the past, but to add to the existing capital of knowledge. The teaching force — assembled from all parts of the world, largely on the basis of original work — and the students — most of whom had already obtained their undergraduate degrees and several of whom had passed one or more semesters in Germany — came to this high enterprise almost in a spirit of consecration. Baltimore itself regarded this body with veneration; faculty and students became, in the city's eyes, almost a monastic colony, vowed to the single-minded search for truth. Many anecdotes were repeated illustrating the zeal that urged the students on. One who inspired especial awe was Josiah Royce, afterward the famous Professor of Philosophy at Harvard, whom President Gilman had brought, a rather ungainly youth, from California. His abbreviated trousers, barely reaching the tops of his boots, may have caused ridicule among the irreverent; the knowing ones, however, whispered that he was planning to give his first year's meditation to Time and his second to Space. Another student was found standing solemnly at the door of the University on a September morning, waiting for the institution to open, while another was said to have kept an all-night's vigil in one of the laboratories, like Don Quixote watching his armour. To a boy fresh from the sectarian colleges of North Carolina and Virginia, Baltimore in 1876 was a new world. "Surely," wrote Page to his mother, "it has opened up my eyes more than any year has done before."

A few letters written at this time to his cousin give Page's earliest impressions.

To Sarah Jasper

Baltimore,
30 September, 1876.

My dear Sarah:

At last I've got quiet —in a measure at least. At any rate I'm not crowded among the 260,000 visitors at Philadelphia.[1] Baltimore, with all the noise of its trading season, seems quiet indeed to me now.

I am bound, however, to own to an unpleasant feeling this evening, as I walked thro' all this town of boarding houses, cold and rainy as it was, without the least visible chance of getting a home. 'Twas an unpleasant business. I had postponed it until the last moment. After dinner, I left my hotel with a determination to find a home before night. This place I wouldn't be pleased with; that one I could not get unless I took it for the winter; and so I went until almost night. Finally I came here — a good place, it seems on short acquaintance, and I have taken it for a week. So for the present my rambles are ended. An embarrassing situation this: a number of Fellows seeking homes, all unacquainted with Baltimore and all unacquainted with one another. Each, from fear of unpleasant companionship, prefers to make an acquaintance with the other before anything like a companionship in a suite of rooms. Thus, in common with others, I am "feeling around," as the North Carolina phrase goes, and being "felt around," living the while a sort of miserable dog-life of it. . . .

25 George Street — 15 October 1876.

You can't overestimate the height of my satisfaction with my circumstances. Everywhere I am thrown with

[1] Page had recently visited the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, in company with Cary friends.

scholarly gentlemen. Indeed there is nothing in the way of scholarly association better in all this land. My chief difficulty is my lack of advancement. Had I given two or three years more to Greek literature I should no doubt appreciate better what I see and hear, and I m sure that I'd have less hard work blasting my way thro' difficulties.

Let me tell you, by the way, we have ladies here who attend the University courses. Every day at our Greek lecture and reading, there is a young lady who seems to keep apace with all that goes on. She is a Quakeress, I think, from her appearance. I have found out nothing about her yet. I only know the colour of the horse she is carried away by every night from the lecture-room, and the face of the old gentleman that accompanies her.

I have had placed, not in books and tales, but right before my eyes, the manner of life of the professional German student. It would perhaps not seem so shocking a thing in Germany; but that it should be here in a southern city is to me at least unnatural. Deliver me from such a life! These men know the classics, to be sure, better than any other men. But they read Homer to catalogue the grammatical peculiarities; they see nothing in Sappho but forms of grammar! For a practical example, there is a gentleman here with whom I am studying Sanskrit. He lives in a back third-story room of a desolate old house. His apartment is uncomfortably bare of all comfort-giving things; but one end of the room is stocked with the most desirable collection of the Greek, Latin, German, French, Sanskrit, and Arabic classics. Not an English book (with two or three unimportant exceptions) there! He can make dictionaries but can no more appreciate the soul beauties of literature than a piano manufacturer can appreciate Wagner. He is a native of Connecticut; and Connecticut,

I suppose, is capable of producing any unholy phenomenon. — A dark life that. Any honest way of living that I can think of is preferable to it.

I had a delightful visit just before I left home down to Barclaysville. Those three old folks there are incomparable, specially Aunt Cady, bless her good soul. And I had the good fortune to see there a copy of Timrod. You may know that I read it eagerly; and was richly repaid too. I wrote off on an old sheet of paper an extract taken here and there just to send you. It is become so dim now, I see, that I fear you can hardly decipher it. Tell me what you think of the piece, "Youth and Manhood." I have written only the most striking verses of it.

To Sarah Jasper

180 N. Carey Street, Baltimore.
30 November 1876.

Dear Sarah:

. . . I don't know how much of my present sort of life I told you about before; but you must have patience to listen to just a word more. For these days are such critical days for me, that I'm become narrow enough to talk of little else. But to say that I'm pleased — that's a mere commonplace. Johns Hopkins is at once a marvel of greatness and goodness — greatness in its projects, goodness in its management. Only see what it is doing for me! It takes me here and gives me absolutely everything that money can buy and that learning can suggest, merely on this one condition: *That I work well.* Such encouragement to aspiring ability deserves remembrance, I think, and thanks. I have no teaching at all to do. But I am plunging into Greek Literature with a full bound. My labour is labour that will count in the years to come. If Heaven

give me a dozen such years of opportunity I may begin to spend my little life-force with some effect. Herein is my great difficulty: I am put side by side with men who have six or seven years start of me, and they are no mean men either. I am pinned down, literally. There's no time left for lighter and pleasanter things. All the world of beauty, all the world of lectures, all the world of social glory, all the world of leisure manhood — these all keep their orbits in the distance. I had hoped that this would not be so. I am just lately come to see my situation clearly.

Nor do I yet claim a sight of all its possibilities. The eyes of all the world are on us here; and if I deserve it and as soon as I *can* do it I shall doubtless have good work somewhere. There's no other place of half the advertising power for a young scholar as the place I hold. Learn to look on me then as a Greek drudge, pounding into boys or men a faint hint of the beauty of old Greekdom. That's most probably what I'll come to before many years. There is little encouragement in it, I confess; and I am sure that I have mistaken my work, or would mistake it, if I considered Greek-teaching my life work. In truth at times I am tempted to throw the whole matter away. My idea is simply this: Without a home-feeling in Greek literature, no man can lay claims to high literary culture. I shall, therefore, hardly do more than break my way into it and then leave it, as a main work.

In dead earnest, I have a strong mind at times to throw up all my scholarly plans, and go to work, go among men, I mean — go into politics, for example. Active work is worth tenfold more than book speculation. But what keeps me from such a course is an idea, that by all this I am gaining strength, and that there is time enough in the future for that. . . .

Baltimore life, I am, all in all, pleased with. I have remade several old half-friends and made a number of new ones. My situation here will enable me to add to my present number, as my pleasure may dictate. But, inheriting a disposition that does not run wild for company, and having no time for more than is just essential to good living, I am not likely to have a wide acquaintance. Moreover, I am always slow in making friends.

II

Basil L. Gildersleeve, the man in whose daily presence Page now found himself, was then forty-five years old, with a reputation as a classicist that extended far beyond the borders of his own country. As he sat at the head of a pine table, with his five disciples ranged along the sides, he certainly looked the part. A brilliancy and sparkle in his eye, and an almost constant smile in the corner of his lips, reflecting at times quiet mockery, at others sympathy and good humour, portrayed a zest for life, and an appreciation of its many-sided qualities, that came from Hellas itself. His large and bulky figure, his great head, with its lofty front, its heavy shock of dark hair, its craggy eyebrows, its fine-spun beard, might have tempted Phidias to use him as a model for Zeus — and indeed his students, with the unerring undergraduate instinct for nicknames, had long since selected the god of the sky for Gildersleeve. And his mind had a force and a sweep not out of keeping with this exterior. He was wise and he was witty; he enjoyed with equal sympathy the dreamers of the Academy and the blatherskites of Attic comedy. His own nature and opinions, indeed, were inextricably mingled with the authors that comprised his spiritual home. Like all good teachers — resembling in this somewhat the Master of

Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve (1831–1924), under whom Page studied the Greek classics in Baltimore

Balliol — his technical instruction furnished merely an excuse for the exploitation of his own soul. "There is no such thing as a dead language to a man who is alive," he would say, and Greek syntax, Greek history, and Greek literature became, in the nearly two years Page spent under his benign sway, very vital things indeed. "The eternal human in Greek cannot die," was another of his convictions — "Hellas speaks to us with a kindred voice and looks into our eyes with kindred eyes"; for he always insisted — especially when called upon to defend the utility of classical study — that the ancient Greeks were the most modern of the moderns, and he even maintained that there was the closest affinity between the Greek and the American spirit. Thus Attic poets, orators and historians, Page discovered, had an immediate association with English literature and American history and the Baltimore newspapers. Above all, they had an intimate connection with Gildersleeve's own life. His discussion of the "articular infinitive" and the "third attributive position in Herodotus" were sometimes interrupted by digressions into his own biography and his experiences in the Civil War. He loved to dwell upon his boyhood days in Charleston — where he was born, the son of a Northern father and a Southern mother, in 1831.

Gildersleeve took an almost impish delight in emphasizing his local allegiances. "I am a Charlestonian first," he would say, "a South Carolinian next, and after that a Southerner." "The years that I have spent in northerly climes have not changed my preference for the light and warmth of the southern sky." Yet the overmastering absorption of his life, his Greek, was the gift of his Northern father. He liked to tell how, as a child at his father's knee, he had spelled out the Gospel according to St. John, "little suspecting," he would add, "the difficulty that

haunts the very first verse," and how, at the age of twelve, he had made an English version of the "Crito" and translated Anacreon into English rhyme, "untroubled by questions of the higher criticism and of pagan morality." "But scratch a classical scholar," he would add, "and you will find a poet"; and so it was with himself. All his life he was a writer of verse, usually of a personal kind; and the "solace of sonnetry" as he described the form in which he found constant delight, remained the great compensation of his old age. He pictured himself, as a young man, haunting Russell's bookshop in Charleston, chiefly because there he could catch glimpses of the contemporary gods of Southern literature — William Gilmore Simms, Paul Hayne, and Henry Timrod. Of all his early reminiscences, however, nothing charmed Page so much as Gildersleeve's account of Edgar Allan Poe. Necessarily the thought was exciting that his Professor of Greek had been a contributor to the *Southern Literary Messenger* in association with Poe himself!

The melancholy genius became a reality as Gildersleeve described him walking along the streets of Richmond, clad in black, "a poetical figure," he said, "if there ever was one, slender, erect, wonderfully handsome." Even more romantic, he had heard Poe himself recite "The Raven" in the old Exchange Hotel in Richmond. From this the talk would shift to Göttingen, where Gildersleeve spent three years under Frantz, a German so Hellenized that he spoke the language of Plato in the classroom and gave each pupil a Greek name, if possible his modern one translated into the ancient tongue. "My own," said Gildersleeve, "was Chrysobrachion." Returning from Germany, Gildersleeve renounced his aspirations to literature as a means of livelihood and became Professor of Greek at the University of Virginia. He had many

gibes against the meditative sleepiness of that old place. When some one asked him whether he would like to be buried there, he answered quickly: "Why not? Wasn't I buried there for twenty years?" Then came the Civil War — and on this, the greatest episode of his life, and the issues involved in it, he could discourse at length. Like Price, Gildersleeve never became reconciled to the defeat of the South. On this point he was always urbane, always broad-minded, but always fixed in his view. He served on Gordon's staff in Early's campaign, and "in that campaign," he would say, "I lost my pocket Homer, I lost my pistol, I lost one of my horses, and finally I came near losing my life of a wound that kept me five months on my back." This wound was from a bullet in the knee; like an injured Hephaistos, Gildersleeve walked with a limp from that day until his death, in 1924, at the age of ninety-two.

Gildersleeve could not have kept away from the Civil War in that first term. The authors studied were Thucydides and Aristophanes — the historian of civil war, the dramatist whose plays describe so poignantly the miseries inflicted on the home population by military adventure. So close was the Peloponnesian War to the recent American scene that Gildersleeve used to call Thucydides "the historian of the war between the States." As to Aristophanes, Gildersleeve himself had a racy touch that made the satirist of Athenian manners a fellow spirit, and his plays, so far as their essential thoughts were concerned, might have been written about the great American conflict. "The slogans and the counter-slogans of American life," said Gildersleeve years afterward in a paper [1] written, at Page's request, for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "are all to be heard in the poems of the bald headed bard. Aristophanes'

[1] "A Southerner in the Peloponnesian War," September, 1897.

picture of Athenian life is strikingly like our own — with its fads, its fancies, its futilities." In this same paper he describes his experiences as a cavalry officer. "I went from my books to the front, and went back from my front to my books, from the Confederate war to the Peloponnesian war, from Lee and Early to Thucydides and Aristophanes." So it was in that first semester at Johns Hopkins. The reconstruction period, just passed, in itself would have stimulated these comparisons of Athens and the North, of Sparta and the South — of the "irrepressible conflict" in Greece and its American counterpart twenty centuries afterward. Discussions, in and outside the classroom, frequently centered about the issues of the struggle in which Gildersleeve had lost the effective use of that leg. Thus the Greek seminary indirectly contributed to Page's political education. In these digressions Gildersleeve was always the Southerner, always the "Charlestonian." But was there any resemblance? some hardy soul would protest — slavery certainly was not the cause of the terrible battles that ruined Greece; both sides practiced slavery to their hearts' content! Gildersleeve's answer was always ready: neither was slavery the cause of the American Civil War. The real cause was Southern insistence on leading its own life — on its right to withdraw from the Union; its refusal to acknowledge the overweening sovereignty of a great central government. This devotion to the State he regarded as one of the finest forces in history. "Take away this local patriotism," he would say, "and you take out all the colour that is left in American life." And that, too, was the cause of the Peloponnesian War. Sparta stood for localism, for "states' rights"; Athens for nationalism. He expressed the idea more comprehensibly in the essay already mentioned; "the great Greek war was a struggle between the Union of which Athens was the mis-

tress and the Confederacy of which Sparta was the head." The real question involved, in both Greek and American conflicts, was civil liberty.

To what extent this reasoning impressed the youthful Page is not recorded. As a mature man he did not accept it; for Gildersleeve's opinions were the ones against which he opened his artillery as writer and editor. Page was too keen-minded not to have detected even then the fallacy in the professorial reasoning; certainly the Greek example was an unfortunate one, for it was this insistence on the rights of the province in preference to those of the nation that caused the destruction of Greece itself. But Page, like the other students, was probably more interested in Gildersleeve's learning, his charm, his spice, than in his interpretation of history and politics — and there remained a suspicion that the great teacher was not entirely persuaded himself. But he did love to talk and to gibe and to provoke cerebration.

All this was time divinely spent, as were the comments on writers and literature in general. Goethe, Gildersleeve asserted, was the great teacher of his life; he loved Tennyson too, and found him very Greek. But for Page the Greek course had its more discouraging moments — hinted at in letters already quoted. Great as Gildersleeve was as a human spirit, his widest fame was gained as a technical scholar. He not only enjoyed the Greek heroes as men and women, but he liked also to engage, as he expressed it, in "a grammatical voyage through the Odyssey." That was the German in him. He was one of the first Americans to sail for Germany — this in the early fifties — in quest of the incomparable Ph.D. Despite all the sneers at German scholastic methods — sneers that were becoming audible even then — Gildersleeve believed in painstaking scholarship. "I am a grammarian first," he said, "and afterward

what you please." Yet he always maintained a gay and humorous attitude toward his own attainments, calling himself a "humble syntaxologue" and proclaiming, as his fondest diversion, "the chemical analysis of Greek style." It was his "droll fate," he would say, "to have to handle a branch of Greek learning abhorrent to so many finely constituted souls." "To Germany and the Germans I am indebted for everything professional, in the way of apparatus and method, and much, very much, in the way of inspiration." Yet in the next breath he would refer to his experience in Germany as his "period of Teutomania." That his name had become a curse to millions of American girls and boys as the author of a famous Latin grammar acted mainly as a stimulus to his wit. "I should not like to have," he said, "my individuality merged in my Latin grammar and 'this sensible warm motion become the kneaded clod'[1] of a crabbed textbook." He was indeed one of the rare cases in which infinite pains spent upon the pursuit of moods and tenses did not destroy the flavour of literature. He wrote good sonnets and became a master of English style. His profoundest conviction on Greek was expressed when he said, "It is not a dead language but a sleeping beauty." And once, after expatiating on the value of grammatical study, he remarked, with a sigh, "But do not forget that I am deeply in love with Sappho."

As years put a sharper edge upon his wit and mellowed his philosophy, Gildersleeve became known as "Saint Basil of Baltimore." Had Page's two years done nothing except to make him a daily companion of this very earthly saint, the experience would have been an education in itself. But life in all its phases was full of animation and productive of new ideas. His chum and roommate, William White Jacques of Boston, has sent valuable glimpses of Page in

[1] *Measure for Measure*, Act III, Sc. 1.

his non-scholastic hours.[1] "My first recollection of Page," says Dr. Jacques, "was at that meeting in which President Gilman made his famous address to the twenty Fellows. At its end the room was soon humming with the busy talking of congenial groups. But Page sat alone, somewhat uncouthly dangling his long legs from the library table. He was younger than most of the others, many of whose names had already become known in their respective callings. He had not been much used to mingling with different men of the world. He was a little shy. Physically he was not particularly attractive — just a bit awkward — but one looked into those frank brown eyes and saw what the man really was.

"Seating myself beside him on the table, we soon fell into conversation — an exchange of confidences. We decided we would like to chum together; and then and there began an intimacy that grew closer and closer throughout the year or more he stayed at Baltimore and a friendship that grew warmer and warmer throughout his life.

"The next morning Page and I started out in search of lodgings. We first chose those offered by a widow from Virginia who lived in a delightful old-fashioned mansion and who seemed much pleased to receive into her family two 'Fellers from the University.' We were made most comfortable. When we went down to dinner we were presented to five very pretty and attractive daughters. That evening they were giving a musicale, and more pretty girls and a lot of socially delightful young men dropped in. Page was, at that age, decidedly a susceptible youth. We passed a most enjoyable evening, and, later, in our rooms, we both grew excessively sentimental over these seductive sirens. Next morning when we had slept on the matter, we decided that the social hearth about which we were so

[1] Personal communication to the author.

happily gathered was not at all the cloister that we needed for the serious pursuit of our studies. So we started out on another voyage of discovery, Page vowing that he would not settle in any house where there was a woman under three score and ten. This we presently found; and the two ancient maidens who occupied the house had the further merits, one of a most wrinkled and bilious visage and the other a nose and chin that nearly met. But they were as good as gold, and throughout the year we spent with them they made us and the many friends we soon gathered about us, more than comfortable. 'This is just what we have been looking for,' said Page; and we were soon in possession of the whole top floor. In front was a large and sunny room that occupied the whole width of the house; and there was a most cheerful old-fashioned brick fireplace built for logs. Owing to Page's happy faculty of gathering around him the best fellowship there was, our 'study' was destined soon to become one of the social and educational centres of the university life.

"Page insisted that we could not settle down to work without a proper 'study-chair'; so we went out and bought two old-fashioned Windsor armchairs, to each of which a carpenter added rockers, and fitted over the right arm a large oval leaf on which to write or rest a lexicon. We also bought a couple of high-backed rush-bottomed rockers for possible guests. Later we bought many more. With our large study table placed in front of the cheerful fire and our new study chairs drawn up on either side, we were prepared for work.

"The various professors and associate professors and even some of the Fellows also gave more or less formal lectures, each in his special field, at which any of the faculty or Fellows were at liberty to attend — and they largely did. I think we all felt the broadening effect of

listening to master minds, even though some of us, and Page among these, were often carried quite beyond our depth. Page was naturally something of a mathematician, and he easily followed Professor Sylvester in his poetry of mathematics, but was absolutely lost when that great mathematician discoursed on the *n*th dimension of space; and when Sylvester went so far as to tell us that he could readily concretely picture a man, by utilizing the fourth dimension, turning an orange inside out without rupturing its skin, Page quietly remarked to me, 'This man must be just a plain fool.' Above all, Page was then, as in all his after life, a man of great good common sense.

"Then there were informal gatherings of the faculty and Fellows which were universally attended. Perhaps no more eminent body of leaders in the various branches of learning were ever set to teach so well-fitted a class of students; and perhaps the real educational broadening came even more from these informal exchanges of wit and wisdom than from the more formal lectures. Certainly Page grew broader day by day. I sometimes fancied I could see him grow. He was now mingling freely with different kinds of men who had widely different kinds of education and widely different special interests in life. He lost all of his shyness. Above all, his personal magnetism quickly made him many warm friends, even among those whom he looked on as far greater than himself; and he had the happy faculty of drawing out the best in those with whom he came in contact. That first year the people of Baltimore promptly opened their hearts and homes to the faculty and Fellows of the university. There were innumerable receptions, teas, dinners, and dances — and we all went. The faculty and Fellows returned this hospitality, so far as it was possible, by social gatherings in the assembly rooms of the university build-

ings — to which these good people all came. Although Page had not before been much used to this sort of thing — he told me he had been so much wrapped up in Greek poetry that he had hitherto 'neglected to take a course in Calico' — he took to it like the proverbial duck to the water. Page was not a dancing man, but he was often the centre of a group of the best talkers and story-tellers in this most brilliant of Southern social centres. Page was certainly growing.

"Broadening as was all this intimacy of contact — whether in class room or in ball room — between so many of the cultured in all branches of learning and all callings of life, perhaps not less broadening was the gathering together in knots of Fellows — with sometimes a professor or two — at our own lodgings — or at those of some other Fellow. Page drew these men often to our own home study. In conversation he was always brilliant, but his most happy faculty was his art of bringing out the best in those around him. Therefore, not only our study chairs and rush-bottomed rockers were frequently filled, but others found seats as best they could on piles of lexicons or the bare floor. Page was a hospitable host. There was always a pile of corncob pipes and a bundle of figwood stems on the mantel — and we all used them. Sometimes Lanman would come and tell us about the researches he was making into the origin and history of some obscure Sanskrit root. This was a bit dry, but Page would skilfully turn the discussion to the customs and manners of ancient peoples as revealed by their usages of this same word and the conversation instantly became alive. Sometimes Royce would bring and read to us a pile of manuscript written for his then proposed treatise on 'The Good and The Not Good.' This interested all of us and we mostly all had something to say.

"To me, the happiest hours, and in many ways the most profitable, were those when I had Page all to myself. Of a stormy evening when nobody was likely to drop in, we seated ourselves in our study chairs, on either side of the table piled with books, and before our cozy fire, to do some serious work. But I guess we mostly talked. Page loved his Greeks. . . . 'Ah,' said he, 'these were the only people who really knew how to live.' He decidedly did not love Greek grammar. 'What,' said he, 'did those old fellows know about grammar, anyway?' He spent much time in translating Greek poems into English poems and in rendering Tennyson into Greek. It was largely for his genius in doing this sort of thing that Professor Price had so strongly recommended him as a candidate for a Fellowship; and it was because of the singular beauty of such of these translations as were submitted as credentials that he was immediately chosen to be one of the five Fellows in Greek.

"To many it may seem a bit strange that Page, a classicist, and I, a scientist, should so almost instantaneously have been attracted to each other. Sometimes we used to talk it over. As a physicist I maintained that the strongest known affinity was that between positive and negative electricity, and that the most unbreakable compounds are those resulting from the combination of most positively electrified atoms with the most radically different negatively electrified atoms. Page maintained that this principle was just as true in the intellectual as in the physical world. He used sometimes to come and spend an hour with me in my laboratory. He was always interested. While he was quite content to leave the details of experimenting to me, he readily grasped the great truths of science that were built up from many such experimental inquiries. Out of some of our scientific discussions, held

between us at our cozy fireside, were born ideas which years later, during the great war, enabled me to do my bit towards the war's winning." [1]

III

"Here's a secret, good cousin," Page wrote to Sarah Jasper in February, 1877. "You mustn't let it get North Carolina-wards. I am going to Germany in May for four months. My batting knowledge of German is every day a blockade to my work; and a summer's work in the thing practically must come. By the way, having no time to devote to the mere acquisition of a language now that I am supposed to have mastered, I go to a German Sunday School. Is this courting the devil for knowledge? So I'm getting a little biblical Dutch."

This news did indeed astonish Page's family when it finally became known. Germany was far distant from Cary in those days; that country was thought of mainly as a heathen land, devoted exclusively to scholarship and irreligion, "a land of damned professors," as Lord Palmerston had called it. Besides, where was Walter to obtain the money for such a strange adventure? Frank Page had not yet recovered from the hard times that had followed the Civil War. But Page was young and fairly rich. Did not his Hopkins Fellowship yield him five hundred dollars a year? That was a noble stipend; out of it he could easily save enough to pay the cost of a German pilgrimage! The ocean voyage, if he judiciously selected an antiquated and leisurely ship — it took him fifteen days to cross — was a small item, and living expenses were lower in Germany than in Baltimore or North Carolina. For Page and his Baltimore chum, W. W. Jacques, quoted above, the

[1] Dr. Jacques was expert for the anti-submarine division of the British Admiralty during the war and the inventor of many devices for detecting submarines.

financial aspect thus presented no embarrassment. Evidently Page had become as closely attached to Jacques as Jacques to him. In one of his letters he pays his companion several tributes — all the more sincere in that they betray a somewhat southern narrowness of viewpoint. "He is that rare thing," he writes, "a Yankee Christian gentleman."

Thus North and South, reunited in these young seekers for knowledge, started arm in arm on a joint enterprise, sailing for Bremen early in June. What really prompted the selection of Germany was the predominant influence that Deutschtum then wielded in American education, above all at Johns Hopkins. Gildersleeve had discoursed so eloquently on German work in the classics, and Jacques' mentors had so persistently held before his eyes the attainments of German scientists, that a Germanic exploration became inevitable. These audacious young men proposed to see for themselves.

Yet Page's first glimpse of a foreign shore was England. In view of subsequent events, his emotions on this occasion are worth preserving.

Saturday morning,
16th of June, 1877.
Off Isle of Wight.

Last night, dear cousin, we came in sight of Land's End Lighthouse and I felt as if I were nearer somewhere. The long two weeks of water was tiresome and assurance of land was gladdening, I confess. It was pleasant, even late last night, so I sat up on deck all the early night. Sure enough, just a few miles to our left lay old England. The shore was followed right closely as I watched, and a whole row of lighthouses was visible constantly. I have just realized that I am so far away from home and where, of all

the land unknown to me, had I rather have the pleasure of gazing, fancy-led, than on England?

Thus I was much later than usual in retiring and this morning almost before daybreak, some one gave the sign of delight and a whole score of men and women, too freshly awakened to look Angelic, rushed adeck to see a castle! The boys caught the excitement and I was aroused, bless you, to see a castle! I was tempted to curse the castle and not to bless the fellow — but the persistent wretch began a long roll of nonsense about King Arthur's time — old England, etc. And then somebody said we were off the Isle of Wight. Immediately the castle became Tennyson's home! I suggested that no doubt the old man could be seen on top waving his hat at us, and succeeded in driving the castle-mad man away. But I couldn't sleep any more and I was gratified, just as I did make my appearance, to learn that the grand castle was only a lighthouse!

But we are now sailing south of the island that has Tennyson, sure enough, altho' we have come too far south I think to see the shore now.

An idea prevails to-day that Page's boyhood visit to Germany disgusted him with that country and laid the basis for much of his criticism as a mature man. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many of Page's letters written from Germany — to his mother, his father, his cousin, Sarah Jasper, and to the *Observer*, of Raleigh, North Carolina — are in the hands of the present writer; and they show a consistently friendly spirit to the German people. They are too numerous for publication in full, and, for the most part, they cover the familiar ground of the traveller; they are descriptions of museums, beer gardens, picture galleries, trips along the Rhine, universities and the

like; though a few phases of German life, such as the use of women as manual labourers in the fields, shock this young American, in the main his attitude is sympathetic. He is impressed by the good nature and happiness that he finds on every hand; the average German he describes as industrious, law-abiding, and substantial, but rather stupid and sluggish. "Something in his life," Page writes, "calls for the deepest pity." The absence of individual freedom and the servile obedience to authority also depress him. But Page admires the general diffusion of German education and the German appetite for books. "There is much more in Germany," he writes, "to attract us than a superficial study of its society for a summer, or than visits to its museums. Of all lands, the Fatherland has to-day the lesson that is more needful for us to learn — especially for us in North Carolina. For other people are already coming to learn it better than we. It is the lesson of scholarship, the lesson of education, the lesson of culture. Such large generalities name it but badly, I am aware. We must learn that which has lately put the Germans at the head of the nations. The very fact that they are in the lead we have need to feel more fully. Plain fact as it is, it is a great thing to know who are doing the work of the age, who are reaching out the widest and furthest and moulding the tendency of the times. For when we come really to know the leaders, we are a step nearer towards imitating them, and in a position to learn more from them. There are two ways in which we must use the Germans, viz: to learn from them directly, and then to learn their secret and apply it for ourselves. For by it we may sometime ourselves do something independently. . . .

"At three of the great Universities that I visited during the summer, I found about seventy-five American students. About ten of these were Southerners, more than five

Virginians, and not one was a North Carolinian. Why is the number of Northern men so very much larger? Because they are richer, is the answer that everybody suggests. It would show better for us if that were the real reason and the whole reason. For the truth is that the greater number of American students who study abroad are not wealthy. They are poor, and many of them are very poor. And it costs hardly more to attend any of the great universities than it costs to attend our own colleges in our State. Indeed to claim poverty as a serious hindrance to scholarship is to deny the whole history of scholarship. Never a nation rose to great culture through greater poverty than these very Germans. We say that we are poor. To say that, therefore, we cannot become scholars is as cowardly as it is untrue. The ail is otherwhere. Our colleges and universities must point Germanwards. This, then, is the first part of the great lesson we must learn from these men — personal contact with their scholarship at their own universities."

The recollections of Page's travelling companion, Mr. Jacques, also disclose a friendly attitude toward the German people. "In the summer following the close of our first scholastic year," he writes, "Page and I went together to Germany, our purpose being, as Page expressed it, 'to see how it seemed to live in a land not ruled by the people, and whether the Kaiser or we could best run a university.' We first settled for awhile in Berlin, where we selected comfortable lodgings and furnished them as nearly as possible like those we were homesick for in Baltimore; student chairs, which the carpenter had some difficulty in understanding, and corncob pipes with figwood stems — which Page had thoughtfully brought with him. Page took kindly to the already-provided feather

beds and feather coverings. We used the big porcelain stove as a refrigerator. Presently some of Page's former fellow-students dropped in. They were taking their post-graduate course at this, the leading university of Germany; and later they brought some of their German fellow-students. They all took kindly to Page and to '*der Studentschaukelstuhl*' and '*der Maiskolbenpfeiferkopfmitderfeigenbaumstamm*,' as they christened our two most novel features of hospitality. As in Baltimore, Page got a lot of fun and many novel ideas out of our social gatherings.

"But our first visitor of all was perhaps the one who made the most lasting impression on Page's mind. Hardly were we settled in our new lodgings than there was ushered in to us, amid the profoundest bows and the most respectful salutations from our worthy landlord, a gentleman with dignified military bearing and in full military costume who, Page first thought, must be the Kaiser. But when our officer had clicked his heels, saluted with military precision and merely asked us for our passports, it dawned on Page's mind that this was only one of the Kaiser's minions. We told him we hadn't any passports; that we had not supposed such documents were necessary; that we were students from America who were travelling through his country and had settled only for a short time in Berlin to see the university. But our officer looked round with suspicious curiosity — perhaps thought our student chairs were man-traps and our corncob pipes ingeniously contrived bombs — shook his head and told us we must provide ourselves with passports. So off we went to the American Legation, where we were told that we would find it more effective quietly to slip the price of our passports into our officer's hand. But Page did not approve of such corruption, so we took our passports, and next day when our officer called, Page handed him these papers and I a

piece of gold. Thereafter our new friend became most valuable to us in a multitude of ways.

"We met Professor Curtius in his lecture room and listened to one of his inimitable discourses with all the appreciation that our limited knowledge of his language would allow. We met Professor Helmholtz in his laboratory, where he most kindly explained to us the researches on which he was then engaged — researches which later proved to be a salient contribution to the modern theory of electro-chemistry. And we met numerous other lights of learning, and attended some of their lectures. We often saw the Kaiser — the much loved William I — who frequently sat quite openly at his window looking on Unter den Linden. He wasn't at all like our friend who wanted our passports. We saw pretty much all there was of interest in Berlin. When we had well done the Friedrich Wilhelm University, we moved on to other seats of learning. With university life, Page was thus far well pleased. He did not take kindly to German militarism. He found the German people kindly and companionable. At Göttingen we lodged with the widow of Professor Klebsch, whose home was the social centre of university life. There we met 'Uncle Wilhelm,' as all the people lovingly designated the great Professor Weber; and numerous lesser lights; and we really got into the swim of social life. We also saw something of student life. We attended a 'kneipe,' where the students wallowed in beer and sang 'Die Lederne Frau Mama' — and other even less reputable songs. We witnessed a student duel, the principals being so protectingly wrapped about that each could hardly more than scratch the cheek of his opponent, and discovered that the dreadful *schlage* was as harmless as a breakfast knife.

"'Rot,' said Page. They do things differently in our country. . . ."

To Catherine Raboteau Page

Berlin, Sunday, July 2, 1877.

My dear Mama,

. . . Let me see, it has been just about a week since I wrote to you. And the week has been a wonderful one for me. I have not done half the running around that Jacques has done; he has had more time than I. But I have seen so many things! This living in a great foreign city is wonderfully suggestive. I feel that I should be almost paid for my trip if I were obliged to go back now, altho' I have yet had time to make hardly a beginning in my work. This week I have done very well — last week, I mean — up to yesterday. As I wrote you, I am grandly fixed; and I have yet been unable to discover a single annoyance or to suggest a single improvement . . .

I am going to tell you about my room and the queer things the Germans have. The bed is a nice spring mattress, as neat and comfortable as can be, with one sheet on it. There is no other sheet nor any quilts, nor blankets about the bed. A counterpane is spread over it all day, but just before night, the old woman comes in and takes that off. For cover, there is a feather bed, but the tick is not half full of feathers. In winter, you see, you can spread out the feathers the same thickness all over and be very warm. In summer you can pack them all down at one end and have only the tick over you. It requires considerable skill to suit the thickness of the feathers to the exact demands of the temperature. The first few nights, I caught cold; but I have learned the trick now and can manage it wonderfully.

I haven't seen a genuine American shaped pitcher, either. In our rooms, we have water in bottles; and these, like the beds, are used by all the mass of German people.

And we have only a candle for light. At the hotels, lights are always put on the bill as a heavy extra, and it is only a candle. I don't see why the houses haven't gas. The streets and offices and stores are lighted by gas; but everybody seems to use candles. Well that is all well enough in summer; for it does not get dark until so late that nobody needs a light. But I don't see how they manage it in winter. The houses are simply the largest I ever saw, and queerly constructed. They are many of them five stories, and some of them six stories, high, and proportionately long. The one just opposite my window is long enough to have ten large windows in front. And every house that I have seen is neatly furnished. They always have good curtains at the windows, and nine-tenths of the windows have flowers in them. Everything looks honest and endurable forever. You must not ever feel ashamed of your Dutch [1] blood, my dear Mama.

There are about twenty American students here at the University: they are all Yankees, I think. I have met several of them; and they are all moreover not at all interested in the literary department of the University. Most of them are students of chemistry. There are in all 2200 students. Just think of that! They are from all the world, Japan, South America, Australia, and everywhere else. The University buildings are magnificent; and the Royal Library, which is under the supervision of the University professors, has 900,000 volumes in it. The great Peabody Library in Baltimore, which they make such a fuss about, has only 60,000. There's a great difference between 60,000 and 900,000 surely.

I am hardly in favour of kings, but when a kingly government does such things as that, I can't help saying

[1] Page, of course, means German; in his day — and sometimes now — it was common in the United States to call Germans "Dutchmen."

"hurrah." The Government owns the Universities, as it does everything else. . . .

I am feeling better than I have for six months. So the summer promises to be as profitable as I had hoped and tenfold more pleasant. I have an excellent teacher to direct me in my German and at a very reasonable price; and I shall acquire, I had almost said, forty times as much here as I could anywhere in America, during the summer. I shall be made fully ready, so far as this goes, I think, for my work at the Johns Hopkins next year.

And this living a little in the Old World is educating to anyone who will but open his eyes. Many ideas of men and things are picked up that are valuable and much is suggested. It is worth more to me than anything that has been done for me for quite a while; and I don't think that I shall ever forget what I half feared Papa would think of my rashness; and I don't mean ever to let him regret it.

My letters, however, are coming along too slowly to suit me. I have received none except yours and Bob's [1] and one from Cary.[2] Give my love to Grandma and Grandpa, and tell him that I have lots to tell him when I come home. And kiss all three of the girls for me three times apiece. Why don't Em [3] write me a letter, I wonder?

Ah, Mama, your letter was so loving and good — God bless you — you are a dear Mama, and why not make them longer?

Your boy,

WAT.

[1] Robert Page, a brother.

[2] Miss Cary Page, a cousin, daughter of the Reverend Jesse Page.

[3] Miss Emma Page, a sister.

To Allison Francis Page

Berlin, Sunday, 8 July 1877.

Dear Papa,

. . . I am now here alone. My friend, Jacques, who was in the room here with me, is gone off on his business of seeing the laboratories at the different universities. I shall not be with him again for several weeks. All the crowd, you see, have come to do more or less travelling but me. Next week, the one of us who left as soon as we arrived from Bremen and went down the Rhine, will be here with me. I am becoming better acquainted every day with the folks I am with, and with the great sights here; and I can get along in saying what I wish ten times better than I could two weeks ago. And I am working very well. The good idea about seeing things here is, if you go like a plain unpretending man, letting guides and servants and all such nonsense alone, it costs nothing to see anything; except now and then, very rarely, they charge five cents or ten cents to let you see the King's castle, and library and a few such very grand things that nobody wishes to see more than once. The Royal Museum here, where all the great paintings and sculptures are, costs nothing to be entered. I usually work away during the morning — and that is as long as one of your days; and then, for rest, I go up to the Museum and stay an hour or two. That is teaching me much; and I enjoy it extremely. There are more things here illustrative of my Greek and Latin reading than I had ever imagined. That does the good of whole years of work in its way. I have been rather fortunate (and that was a pure accident, of course) in getting this room here, for the old folks who occupy the adjoining part of the house are coming to take a great interest in me. So they are always ready to talk; and that is just what I want, you

see, to help me in getting the language. The old gentleman comes in now nearly every day to do my own room and stays an hour or more. It delights him beyond all measure to tell him about American things. He can't understand our politics at all. When I tell him that anyone can call President Hayes a scamp without being arrested, he looks as if he didn't believe it. He is just now very much interested in our politics; and he asks the queerest questions imaginable. He can't understand how it is that anybody can be Governor; or why the Governor's sons should not always succeed him. The way of having thirty or forty States all with Governors and Legislatures and then a President and Congress besides, is too deep for him. The old lady is — O, Gracious, as big as an elephant! I told her yesterday that she could not have grown so large in America. She said that she wished she had been born there then. I am a sort of curiosity to them; and they are more help to me than they know, by their talking. . . .

To Catherine Raboteau Page

Berlin, 19 July, 1877.

My dear Mama,

. . . My work is not coming on so briskly as I had hoped. I am become so well acquainted here now and the things to be seen are becoming therefore more interesting, that I am fooled out of a great deal of time by the Museum. But that is, by no means, time lost. I am learning so much from it! These three weeks here have shown me such splendid illustrations of my reading in and about Greek that I wouldn't take a whole year's work for it. I am sorry that I shall have next week to go out of reach of the Museum. But I shall go away to Cassel then.

It is a great thing to know the Greeks. They were the

most wonderful people the world has ever had, and I see it so beautifully shown here — and so variously. At home, we have our ideas of them only from books. Here are pictures and sculptures and drafts and plans and everything that can picture their life to us better. And not a little of their own work in sculpture is here too. They had the greatest poets, the wisest rulers, the best artists, the bravest men, the loveliest women — the cheerfulest, brightest life.

But let me tell you about a little excursion I made the other day out to Potsdam, the summer residence of the kings. The old palace of Frederick the Great was the most interesting thing to me. Inside nearly everything is now just as it was when the old fellow died. But the outside is the most attractive. The palace is on an elevation of about fifty feet, up which there goes a flight of steps — 150 steps. On each side of it for a hundred yards are the prettiest of flower pots, and fountains almost without number. At the bottom of this hill, where the steps begin, there is a fountain that throws up a column of water 112 feet high. All round in every direction it is only an elegant park with aspens and pines and oaks. Everywhere are nicely gravelled walks, and statues and flower beds and little fountains. The place is not a great, imposing prison-looking building as most palaces are, but only a single story high, with a sort of dome in the middle. To be sure, the inside is gorgeously fitted up with crimson walls and silver stands and chandeliers and marble floors; that is somewhat like the other royal dwelling places, too fine to look comfortable. I have never yet seen one that had a real cozy, comfortable appearance: they look splendidly cold. But the situation of this is the loveliest I ever saw. To have the house fitted up sensibly inside and let the surroundings be just what they are, except the soldier who walks with his

gun by each end — that would be a place good enough for anybody to live. It is the most desirable piece of property, I am convinced, that this royal family with all their dozens and dozens of palaces, possess.

I staid out there and roamed around thro' the pretty walks where I could hear the fountains splashing on one side, and the music of the military parade back in the town on the other, until it was night — 9 o'clock. And the train had left me. So that night I didn't get back to my own bed until just twelve (one night of irregularity!). . . .

The following are extracts from other letters:

". . . I had become broken up from profitable work in Berlin four or five days before I had need to come further down south, to get settled for the rest of my stay in Europe. So I took the occasion to run up to Copenhagen. What for? You can very easily guess. To see Thorwaldsen's sculptures. I never spent four days of nearer absolute happiness in my whole life than those four days in Denmark. To be in Denmark was of itself an extremely interesting thing. The men and manners, they are so queer! It is a world still another step further from us than the German world. The narrow little streets of Copenhagen, the odd little Danish men and women, the way they eat and live, the great harbour with thousands of ships and flags of every nation, the mixture of languages on the quays — oh, I could not ever tell the strange and interesting sights that were crowded into those days. The pretty little steamers that run up the sound to Elsinore (or Helsingör, as they call it) make a pleasant ride along the picturesque coast. And the little town of Elsinore, itself literally as old as the hills, its great fortifications on the narrow sound — the platform of the Hamlet and the Ghost scene — all these made me feel as if I walked consciously in a dream. 'Is it really

true?' I would have now and then to ask myself. A walk along the beach at sunset and at sunrise in that far-off land where so few hours intervene between the one and the other was a new experience indeed. It gave me entirely new sensations. Not far away, in a wooded park, is a mound which they tell you is Hamlet's grave. Be as slow to believe such a definite fixing of what is half myth, half history, the place and the thing will seem real enough. The peculiar gloominess of the day and the darkness of the woods almost convinced me to a literal faith. I was there all alone and not even any of our American party of boys knows yet that I have been to Denmark. I love (and in that I am foolishly selfish) to run away from the world once in a while, and do something, just I and myself, and gain a new idea or a new experience with nobody's sharing to warp or modify its effect. . . ."

". . . I wanted to tell you something about how nicely I am fixed and how royal a time I am having. I am by dint of perseverance, and by the help of amusing incidents, getting into this colloquial jargon. I am Germanized as thoroughly as a fresh foreigner can well become in so short a time. And I was never happier in my life. This new world has made me forget much that would disturb me at home. But being made German does not help me in some small things, e.g., in spelling. Don't be surprised if I spell America with a *k*, or put in extra *sch's* now and then. . . ."

IV

There is something stimulating to the imagination in these self-given glimpses of Page, aged twenty-one, roaming about the grounds and palace of Potsdam — the headquarters of those Hohenzollerns against whom he was, forty years afterward, to direct his pointed shafts — and

absorbing, from German museums and German lecture halls, an increased love of Greek art and Greek letters. That this German experience was high adventure is evident from the fact that Page, on his arrival in New York — again on a creaky and inexpensive boat — did not have money enough to pay his railroad fare to Baltimore. His available financial resources just enabled him to reach Princeton, New Jersey; here his old Randolph-Macon chum, Wilbur Tillett, advanced — out of his own slender store — the money needed to transport Page to Johns Hopkins, where, in October 1877, he began his second year.

It did not need a visit to Germany to alienate Page from the particular form of classical study in which that country excelled all other nations. With the beginning of this second term his aversion to root-grubbing scholarship increased. This despairing note now becomes the prevailing one in his letters. "My companions here," he writes, "work on scientific subjects to find new discoveries, and they find them; they work in literature to find new facts of language or of history and they find them. And this is a clear-cut object of their work. While I am studying literature merely because I would rather do that than anything else. I am this year reading the Greek tragedians as my main work, for precisely the same reason that I read Shakespeare — and not to find out any new grammatical fact, nor prepare myself to teach Greek. My work is only my own enjoyment and only for my own growth. . . . I never studied Greek because I was fascinated with the hope of finding a new grammatical principle or because I looked upon teaching as a life end. The good and the growth that a man gets by contact with Hellenism — that and that alone drove me. . . . I manage to steal much time to read generally in fine literature. I can never lay Tennyson aside. Shelley, too, I am enjoying at intervals that I wish

were not so far apart. I am going to begin on Italian now. I have joined a class to read Dante. That will take much of the time I had hoped to put to some French and German poetry, but I can't do all things at once. Just now, too, I am enjoying Homer. Professor Gildersleeve is giving a series of popular public lectures on the Odyssey. Splendid scholar that he is! He makes one grow wondrously! Along with this I have not a little that is less pleasant, to be sure. I must read for grammar's sake sometimes and get up dry statistics from dry Greek because I hold a place whose work is just that. In strict truth I ought not to hold the place I do here. I am not working in the line that it requires and ought to require."

"Yes," Professor Gildersleeve used to remark, "Walter Page studied under me two years; then he found me wanting and left." But the fact is that Page became aware, as the months went on, that a life of minute scholarship would never satisfy his more comprehensive attitude toward the world. He had acquired enough German to read Goethe, and, in Goethe at least, Germanism helped form his philosophy. The phrase that kept running in his mind during these last few months was Goethe's *Gedenke zu Leben* — "Think of Living." "It's a life that I have in charge," Page wrote about this time, "and that's a great thing. . . . The fact that I am is a fact of tolerable importance to *me*." In March, 1878, he therefore relinquished his fellowship and left Johns Hopkins, without a degree.

Page's training in Greek was thus only one ingredient in the formation of his mind and character. A Greek scholar in any philological sense he never became. "All that the best of us reach is a smattering, and I am proud of my smattering," said Gildersleeve. Page's "smattering" in Greek was infinitely smaller than Gildersleeve's, yet, compared with that of the average American college

boy of that era — and especially of this one — it was far more than a "smattering." And, in view of the modern disrespect for classical training, his experience has its lesson. For it needs no fanciful eye to discover the influence of Greek on Page's subsequent work and thinking. Terseness and clarity — these certainly are classic traits, and these are the foremost qualities, not only of Page's writing, but of his life. His ability to go straight to the point, to concentrate upon the main idea, to disregard unessentials and cling to the substance — herein also is a fruit of his familiarity with the Greek writers. Absence of prejudice, the refusal to be led astray by emotion or preconception, the vision to see things as they are, the instinct for truth — these, too, are all Greek characteristics, and these were also the qualities that directed Page's career. That intense curiosity — the talent for examining every new thing — this virtue in Page seems almost a direct legacy from Hellas. His life, like all things Greek, was built upon a few straight and undeviating lines. It contained a few clearly carved ideas — ideas on the state, on literature, on religion, on citizenship, on the conduct of life, and these ideas dominated his energies as a struggling young man and as an Ambassador. It is seldom, indeed, that one confronts a career so classic in its form and purpose. Page always had a love for lofty things, whether in character, in literature, in public life, or in human motives. How much his university training explains this, and to what extent these capacities were innate, it may not be possible to determine. Yet it must always be kept in mind that this man was a product of "useless learning." Education in his case meant, not an addition to his capital for piling up success, but merely the machinery for the expansion of his own spirit. He started life with no equipment — except the equipment of a trained mind, stocked with a few ideas.

Through all the succeeding years, Page kept in touch with "Saint Basil of Baltimore." When he became editor of important magazines, he frequently turned to Gildersleeve for contributions. For Page, Gildersleeve expanded his comparison of the Peloponnesian and the American civil wars,[1] and, when the great Grecian, aged sixty-four, made his first trip to Greece, he wrote for Page three essays,[2] in which, following his usual habit, he mingled Greek and American customs, Platonic philosophy, and Yankee and Confederate politics. These writings Gildersleeve used to refer to as his "Sargasso work" — that is, his "Weeds from the *Atlantic*." Page's final meeting with his old teacher took place in July, 1914; Page was sitting at his desk, as Ambassador to Great Britain, when the white-haired old man, as gay, as shrewd, as debonair as ever, quietly strolled in. For the next few days the two saw much of each other, discussing old times at Johns Hopkins, international politics, literature, and the sights of London. "Every step of your distinguished career," said Gildersleeve, "I have followed with the deepest interest, though I am not one of those teachers who take credit to themselves for what their pupils have wrought."

Page asked the old man what had led him, in his eighty-fourth year, to pay England a visit at that particular time. He evaded the question. Finally, warning Page not to laugh at him and to keep the matter secret, he confessed. It was that, before he died, he might visit the scenes of Scott's novels and Burns's poems!

"I know them," said Gildersleeve, "as well as I know my Latin grammar, but I want to see them. You know we used to talk about them forty years ago!"

[1] "A Southerner in the Peloponnesian War," *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1897.

[2] "My Sixty Days in Greece," *Atlantic Monthly*, February, March, May, 1897.

CHAPTER IV

SHAKESPEARE AND JEFFERSON

I

IT was quite in keeping with his humour that Walter, after leaving Johns Hopkins, should retire for a few weeks to "the Old Place across Crabtree," and spend the time here in conversation with his grandfather, in reading his favourite poets, and in meditating on the future. The house always inspired in him the philosophic mood. A few letters of this time record excursions into literature and thoughts on many weighty subjects, in particular religion. His ever-present companions were Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Matthew Arnold, Wordsworth, and Milton. A new discovery was Chaucer. Page's comments on these and other writers are necessarily juvenile and not important as literary criticism, though now and then he does disclose a spark of insight, as in the remark that the achievement of Tennyson in the "Idyls" is not that the poet "has done a great thing, but that he has done a little thing greatly." The importance of Page's reading is that it shows the quality of the food upon which this adolescent mind was feeding. Page, on his literary side, was the product of the heroic commonplaces of English literature. The thoughts and phrases that had stimulated generations of Anglo-Saxon minds sufficed for him. For the abnormal and the freakish and the degenerate he never had anything except aversion. He despised the pre-Raphaelites with the same heartiness that he scorned the peddlers of passing political nostrums. In all departments of life he was the steadfast upholder of the healthy mind. His allegiances in

literature were well expressed in the words of Carlyle: "We are all the subjects of King Shakespeare."

In the latter part of April Page was back again at his father's home in Cary; and here the days were also spent in reading. It must have been about this time — though the date is not precisely fixed — that he chanced upon the book that, of all others, had most to do with shaping his active life. "I recall," Page wrote to his wife many years afterward, "a plan that I had worked out in Cary, long before the days of the *Chronicle*[1] — a plan for the economic broadening of the vision of these people, and I had a most intelligent man sit down in Birmingham last night and expound that very plan as the result of twenty years of thought." It was the reading of Henry S. Randall's "Life of Thomas Jefferson" that started Page's mind in this direction. "I send you the three volume 'Life' of Jefferson — Randall's," he wrote his friend Wallace Buttrick in 1912. "You may have a little trouble in picking up a copy and you ought to read it right away. Whenever you've read it or whenever you've got you a copy, you can send this back. It has some of my youthful annotations in it which I may like to look over and laugh at when I get old."

That Page, on his bookish side, was a product of the great Elizabethans and Victorians, is a point already made; similarly, in his ideals of American life and American institutions his guardians were the founders of the Republic. American contributions to polite letters might not be preëminent; in the field of political literature, Page always insisted, this country held an exalted place. At Randolph-Macon, in association with Jack Wardlaw, he had dabbled in the writings of Jefferson and Madison; but not until Randall's "Life" fell into his hands, did his con-

[1] The *Chronicle* was established in 1883.

ception of the American experiment, and especially the part played in it by the Southern States, assume a definite outline. Probably few people of this generation have read Randall's three huge volumes. As a biography the work is not inviting; it is undiscriminating in its hero worship; it is diffuse and ill-proportioned in its plan, and indeed, it has no style. As an encyclopædia of information about the great Virginian, however, it is still indispensable. In literary history it has its particular fame, for it was these volumes, falling into the hands of Macaulay, that caused him to write his famous letters to Randall, in which he prophesied the eventual disintegration of the United States.[1] On the youthful Page, Randall's book produced a far more optimistic impression. It filled his mind with an admiration for Jefferson which subsequent years modified only in certain details. Jefferson as the antagonist and critic of Washington aroused in Page little respect; Jefferson's indecision and general inadequacy when confronted with the problems presented by the European convulsions of the early nineteenth century, he always regarded as a deplorable episode in American history; but Jefferson as a political philosopher and as a moulder of a high type of human society, he looked upon as the supreme master. With the qualifications already mentioned, Page was prepared to take the statesman of Monticello as his guide. A new star rose in his heavens the day he formed this intimate acquaintance with the most intellectual and the most far-seeing of American Presidents.

It would be possible to point out many resemblances between Jefferson and Page, just as it is easy to indicate other respects in which they were utterly unlike. Both men came from the substantial farming class of the South

[1] "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," by Sir George Otto Trevelyan, Appendix.

rather than from its patrician order.[1] Both spent their infancy and childhood in an undeveloped country, and both absorbed in early life a love of nature, a passion for the products of the soil, and a belief in agriculture as the noblest occupation of man. Their education followed similar lines. Its basis in each instance was the classics, with particular emphasis on Greek, and to this each added a schooling in English literature. Jefferson went so far as to learn Anglo-Saxon, and he advocated the teaching of this "dead" language as part of an American education. Both men were excellent mathematicians — an attainment one is surprised to find in Page, for his mind sparkled, first of all, with humour, imagination, and a love of poetry. On the personal side, indeed, the two men were quite unlike. The stately formality of Jefferson — a formality that many interpreted as coldness, even priggishness — contrasted with the liveliness, geniality, and explosive temperament of his pupil. The subtlety and mobility that made the Virginian such an accomplished politician and manager of men had nothing in common with the straight and hard hitting qualities of Page. Probably, also, Jefferson loved mankind rather than men — though he was capable of strong attachments — while Page was likely to regard every problem from a personal standpoint. It would be difficult to imagine Page ridiculing Plato and scorning fiction — as Jefferson did. It was in the deeper concerns and attitudes of existence that the two men were alike. From Jefferson Page learned the great lesson of the unity of the American system. Much as Jefferson believed in local government where local affairs were concerned, he was a strong supporter of the Federal Union. Virginia, the State that worked so hard to disrupt the Union, produced the

[1] Jefferson's father, Peter Jefferson, was of middle-class farming stock, though his mother, Jane Randolph, belonged to the Virginia aristocracy.

statesman who was chiefly responsible for cementing it; certainly the man who added Louisiana to the national riches became the primal architect of an undivided country. "I can scarcely contemplate a more incalculable evil," wrote Jefferson, "than the breaking of the Union into two or more parts." This old Southerner also taught this young Southerner another great lesson: a hatred of slavery. Page, in reading his life, was struck by the discovery that the philosopher of Monticello was one of our first abolitionists! And on the profoundest question of all — God and the destiny of man — the youthful Page, fresh from "fundamentalist" colleges in the South and from Johns Hopkins, found that his new mentor had expressed his own convictions. "I am a Christian," wrote Jefferson to Benjamin Rush in 1803, "in the only sense in which he [Jesus] wished me to be: sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to him every human excellence, and believing that he never claimed any others." That was the kind of a Christian Page remained throughout life.

Above all else Page learned from Jefferson the worth and the dignity of the individual man. This is perhaps another way of saying that he learned from him the truths of democracy, but Page, acting on his Jeffersonian studies, gave to that word more than a purely political meaning. The whole purpose of Jefferson's career and teachings, as he saw them, was to free the average man and woman from the trammels the centuries had laid upon them. These rested as heavily on the Virginia of Jefferson's youth as on the contemporary Europe. That the Virginian might cease to be a peasant, developing the soil for the benefit of a grasping master, Jefferson ended the entailment of estates, thus making possible the distribution of the land among its cultivators. As an essential to the growth of an agricul-

tural democracy, he destroyed primogeniture, which meant that the oldest son in future had no advantage over the others in the inheritance of property. That other age-long prop of an aristocracy, a State Church, he relegated to the past by writing the Virginia statute for religious freedom — decreeing that no religious establishment should be supported at public expense, and that all should enjoy equality and freedom under the law. But far more important than all these things, Page believed, was Jefferson's insistence on the enlightenment of the average mind. The whole Jeffersonian structure rested on popular education. "I think," said Jefferson, and it is easy to conceive the glow with which Page read the words, "by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness." As early as 1779, Jefferson became the proponent of the idea that education was the function of the State — an idea commonplace enough now, but revolutionary then. He laid down a plan for Virginia that represented statesmanship of the highest type. Under its terms, every boy and girl was to be educated in the primary subjects at public expense; the whole of Virginia was to be divided into "hundreds," and each hundred was to maintain a brick or stone schoolhouse. Not the least radical feature was the inclusion of girls, for it was not until 1789 that Boston itself took such a progressive step. But Jefferson's plan went beyond this. Like all the great political philosophers, from the days of Plato, his mind was occupied with a plan whereby the ablest talents and characters might be discovered and trained for leadership in government. His political State was an aristocracy in the best sense — the rule, that is, of the wisest and justest; its leaders, however, were not to be chosen from a privileged

class, but selected upon a strictly democratic and competitive basis. So far as the great masses were concerned, the responsibility of the State ended with giving them a primary education. Jefferson did not advocate the training, in the higher branches of learning, of every child. It was the duty of a democracy to educate ability and not mediocrity. His educational system therefore provided a method of searching out, in manor house and mountain hovel, boys "of the best learning and most hopeful genius and disposition," and of their training, first in grammar or high schools, and afterward at William and Mary College, for leadership in the State. And thus it appears that Jefferson had taken a lesson from that Plato whom he affected to despise, for his arrangement of citizens in classes, based on talent and character, is not unlike the iron men and bronze men and gold men of "The Republic." Only Jefferson proposed to train his "philosopher kings" in something more immediately related to the American scene than the theory of abstract ideas. His plan of education was so modern that it almost startles. First of all, Greek, Latin, and mathematics; then the English language, English history, politics and economics; physical training; manual training; and — something few would look for in Jefferson — military training. Above all, education was to be divorced from any church or any sect, and become the highest responsibility of the Government.

This then was the future which Jefferson, still a young man,[1] imagined for his democratic Virginia; — it was to be a Virginia without slaves, without privileged classes, all its hills and valleys dotted with schoolhouses, its territory cut up into small farms, tilled by an educated class of small proprietors, the path to enlightenment and public service open to every child who had "the genius and disposition"

[1] He was thirty-six at the time.

to enter it. There is something dramatic — and tragic — in this picture of Page, reading the plan for his South which its greatest political thinker had foreshadowed, and reading it amid the ruins of his country — ruins caused, as he now saw, because the South had put aside the Jeffersonian teachings. Instead of a system of free white labour, the extension of slavery; instead of public schools supported at State expense, a system of privately managed instruction, shabby and inadequate, usually in the control of religious sects; instead of a great body of intelligent citizens, more than a third of the white population unable to read and write. Thus had the South turned its back on its democratic leader! For half a century it had been the fashion — a fashion not yet passed — to abuse and ridicule Jefferson, to paint him as a visionary, an impractical "theorist." The section that had led in this depreciation, Page now discovered, was the South itself — and even Virginia. The leaders of the thirty years preceding the Civil War — men like Calhoun, Yancey, Slidell, Jefferson Davis — were themselves chiefly responsible for the low estimation in which Jefferson was held. The reason was plain: the type of South they were constructing could not exist unless the Jeffersonian idea in American life were dispelled. As Page saw it then, and more clearly saw it afterward, the South of 1878 was a huge ruin for this very reason. That there was another South — a submerged one — he knew; the "Old Place," with its ancient associations, had taught him that. More and more, as time went on, did Page perceive that prosperity depended upon undoing the mistakes of the thirty years preceding the war, and bringing it back to the foundations which Jefferson had planned. Public education, of both white and black; the training of teachers; the growth of State universities; the development of a diversified agriculture — the encourage-

ment of everything that improved the body and mind of the average man — only along such lines did Southern salvation lie. Never had history wreaked a more terrible vengeance for the failure to follow the light. What finer mission in life than to devote one's energies to bringing his region back to the teachings of its own great statesman and to do one's part in reorganizing Southern life on the plan that had lain neglected for a century? This, then, was clearly the "plan" for the improvement of the South which Page, in the letter already quoted, said that he had "worked out in Cary, long before the days of the *Chronicle*."

For a lifetime Page was thus an upholder of Jeffersonism in its finest phases. His admiration came publicly to the surface in 1908, when Virginia offered to place the statue of Robert E. Lee in the Capitol at Washington. Page was one of many Americans who opposed giving this honour to the Southern leader. He had admiration enough for Lee: but there were at least two greater Virginians, he insisted, one of whom should fill this vacant place. "The State of Virginia," he wrote, "has decided to send statues of Washington and Lee, as its two greatest men, to be put in the Capitol at Washington; and the choice of General Lee has of course provoked a controversy that turns on the Confederacy. The more proper ground of controversy would be the fitness of this choice by a State where Jefferson and Marshall were born. With the very highest admiration of General Lee's character, most men outside of Virginia — at least, those who have a good historical perspective — would regard the author of the Declaration of Independence and the statute of religious freedom in Virginia, the founder of the University of Virginia, the first great leader of the (now) Democratic party, the purchaser of the vast Louisiana territory, who was besides

Governor of the State and twice President of the United States — all this in addition to his diplomatic service and his contributions to the agricultural and other scientific knowledge of his time and a personality so versatile and so engaging that he was one of the most interesting men in the world at a time of many interesting men — most students of history would regard such a man as the second man to Washington to honour in this way. Or, perhaps, some would so regard Marshall, who gave the Federal Constitution and the Union itself a vitality and a stability that could have been given to them in their earliest period in no other way and by no less strong a personality. The Virginians are not reprehensible for their deep admiration for General Lee, which the whole country has, perhaps, by this time come to share; but have they not mistaken a very proper and all but contemporaneous affection for sound historical judgment?" [1]

II

An opportunity came sooner than Page had expected to make one contribution to North Carolina on Jeffersonian lines — to do his little part in the beginnings of popular education. In a somewhat feeble way the State University at Chapel Hill was taking the first steps toward better things. This institution which, before 1861, had ranked high among Southern educational forces, itself illustrated the low estate which intellectual concerns had reached. The Reconstruction marauders had seized the place after Appomattox and almost destroyed it. In 1870, for lack of money and pupils, it closed its doors. In 1875 it again flickered into life; and a few enlightened leaders started valiantly the work of restoring its useful-

[1] The fact is that Robert E. Lee was selected as Virginia's second representative in the Capitol Rotunda.

ness. They made such satisfactory progress that, in 1878, they decided to attempt a little pioneer work among a class that desperately needed it — the school teachers of the State. The Peabody Fund advanced the money for the establishment of a summer normal school. Page, then spending a few weeks at Cary, reading Chaucer and pondering the problem of his country's future — as well as his own — was asked to take in charge the department of English. His letters show that this invitation pleased him. Here was a chance to do something for the Old North State in a fundamental work — the training of school teachers.

That summer at Chapel Hill, where about two hundred "Normalites," as they were called, gathered in the hope of adding a few graces and essentials to their mental equipment, has long been famous in the history of the State. From it really started the "educational revival" that has had such splendid flowering in recent years. Several of the men who became the leaders in the reformation were in Chapel Hill at that time. Edwin A. Alderman, Charles B. Aycock, and Charles D. McIver — all these, then undergraduates at the University, attended Page's lectures in the warm summer evenings, and drank in the lessons which he was handing on from Thomas R. Price and Basil L. Gildersleeve. "I well remember the first time I ever saw Walter Page," says Dr. Alderman.[1] "I was then a student at Chapel Hill and a member of the summer school of 1878. I happened to be passing the lecture hall one evening. The doors and the windows were open. I peered in, and there I saw a young man — about twenty-two or three — spare and tall, with brown hair and brown eyes, standing on the platform. I was especially struck because he was not wearing the uni-

[1] Now President of the University of Virginia.

form of an orator and had no speechifying manner. In those days in the South a public speaker dressed the part: he usually wore a frock coat, a white necktie — and in his oratorical progress certain conventional attitudes were expected. This young chap, however, wore a business suit; he was standing at the edge of the table, one hand resting on it, and leaning forward, not orating, but merely talking earnestly, in a quiet, conversational tone — rapidly and with the utmost ease. I was so struck with his unpretentious appearance that I went in and took a seat. That evening the young man was speaking on Greece and Greek literature, telling the old familiar story that most of our intellectual inheritance comes from Greece — our literature, our art, our philosophy and so on. It was a wonderful picture of earnest and persuasive youth, and it has always been a treasured recollection."[1]

For six weeks Page taught and lectured — his leading topic, and the one in which he made his greatest success, being Shakespeare. His triumph was so conspicuous, indeed, that there was much discussion about adding him to the permanent staff of the University. Page himself always believed that his religious views made any such distinction impossible. Professorships were then distributed largely on the basis of "recognizing" the several sects that ruled supreme in North Carolina, and to none of these did Page belong. There was nothing irreverent in Page's attitude toward religion. The views which he held, as a young man of twenty, were the views which practically all educated men hold to-day, including many of the leaders of the church in which he had been trained. But his ideas were the subject of much whispered conversation in Chapel Hill that summer. At a certain Sunday dinner, clergymen being present, Page had engaged in a discussion concern-

[1] Personal communication to the author.

ing John Wesley, Herbert Spencer, and Darwin; though he had not spoken disrespectfully of the eminent Methodist leader, he had intimated that, in certain respects at least, Darwin was a greater man. Years afterward, Page's sense of humour was tickled when he learned that, as a consequence of this conversation, he had been described by one of the Methodist preachers at Chapel Hill as "a talented monster." It is not likely, however, that this incident prevented his appointment. The most influential men at the University regretted that they could not add him to the staff. The embarrassing fact was that there was no money in the treasury; the institution was so poor that it was then paying such professors as it had — there were only four or five — partly in notes. Though Page always felt a slight disappointment that North Carolina had not made it possible for him to spend his life within its borders, this feeling never became anything resembling a grievance. He had long before decided not to become a teacher, and it is doubtful whether his restless and expanding spirit could ever have quietly settled down to academic life.

By this time, indeed, Page had fixed upon his life programme. He knew that he had a hard apprenticeship to serve; but his ambition was to become a leader in periodical literature. This was the career he believed specially adapted to his temperament and capacity; moreover, it would give, above all others, the opportunity of advocating the causes that were becoming more and more his chief interests. By September he was back again in Cary, meditating ways of making his aspirations effective. His childhood home had now become a fair-sized village. His father, Frank Page, had established several enterprises — sawmills, cotton and tobacco factories; possibly he thought that work of this kind might furnish occupation for his oldest son; yet Walter himself never had the slightest ambition of the

kind. At this time, as afterward, he was dreamy, even visionary; there was not lacking in him a tincture of the Sentimental Tommy — he was given to building air castles, to picturing his present and his future in colours so lifelike that he almost persuaded himself of their reality; and always his mind drifted into far different realms from the one in which it was then confined. He was, of course, writing poetry — much of it in the "In Memoriam" stanza; and among his papers are Wordsworthian meditations in blank verse. A few lines from one of his poems, "The Song of the Pines," are worth quoting, because they disclose, with real feeling, one of the leading emotions of Page's life — his love for North Carolina, and for the stately trees whose music never ceased to fill his ears.

They hang their harps for the winds to sweep —
Strung to a soft low Southern tone;
An ocean of music from mountain to deep
Waves with the waves of the wind — lone
And low is their song,
Centuries long,
The song of the lands that beneath them sleep.

. . . . . .

The fair in their sound are laid to sleep,
The bones of the brave beneath them rest;
The hopes of the dead die not, but keep
In their song a thrill for a younger breast.
'Tis the tale of her years,
That the old State hears
Roaring in music from mountain to deep.

Majestic, eternal, the swell of their roar —
A burden of hope, if a burden of woe —
Telling in song, traditional lore;
Ernest and tender, solemn and slow,
A promise and prayer,
Forever they bear,
From the past to the future for evermore.

CHAPTER V

AN APPRENTICESHIP IN JOURNALISM

I

THAT fate which seemingly lies in store for all American public men — a brief period teaching school — came to Page in the autumn of 1878. He was spending days of apparent idleness at his father's home when a telegram came from Louisville, offering him "the chair" of English Literature and Rhetoric at the Male High School. No prospect was more discouraging to Page than the existence of a pedagogue; but here was the chance to earn $1500 a year — a vast sum in the South at that time. "It may open the way for me to — well, to journalism," he wrote; and, a few days afterward, he was crossing the Alleghenies on the way to his new vantage ground. The nine months spent in directing the literary appreciations and moulding the English style of three hundred young Kentuckians represented, on the whole, a delightful experience. Page liked Louisville and Louisville liked Page. He found the people charming; he loved the city's museums and libraries, its Macauley's Theatre — where he saw Modjeska, Mary Anderson, and other important stage figures of the day; and he spent such evenings as were unengaged studying Æschylus and Shakespeare. But the business of correcting schoolboy "compositions," leading his charges through the mazes of grammar, attending "faculty meetings" and the like could hardly appease his restless spirit. One winter of this routine quite sufficed, though all his life he had the friendliest feeling for this enterprising city.

At one time, indeed, he had visions of himself perma-

nently settled in Louisville. Page had lived here only four months when the chance came, as he believed, of achieving his ambition to edit and own a magazine. In January, 1879, the first number of a new periodical appeared — *The Age*, "modelled after the English weekly reviews," as it confessed in its prospectus. In typography, in arrangement of subject-matter — with its "review of the week," its larger captioned editorial articles, its "correspondence," and its notices of books — it aped assiduously its acknowledged exemplars. A rich citizen of Louisville, who had literary inclinations and who believed that the New York *Nation*, then pursuing a successful course, hardly treated Southern problems fairly, had launched the new weekly as a kind of Southern antidote. Page sent in a review of Bayard Taylor's recently published "Prince Deukalion" — and, as a result of its success, soon found himself a regular contributor. He became a good friend of the proprietors and spent many hours at the office discussing books and public questions. But the inevitable happened. The public did not appreciate this attempt to picture adequately Southern issues; and the rich progenitor, finding the printing bills irksome, tired of his enterprise. Page was therefore invited to purchase a half interest in the paper and to become a permanent member of the staff. He did not possess the thousand dollars necessary to complete the transaction, but, to a young man of Page's sanguine temperament, that was no obstacle. "I am half owner of *The Age!*" he gleefully announced in a letter written Easter Sunday, 1879. "I feel sure I have laid the foundation of a lifetime's independence." "There is in New York" (clearly a reference to the *Nation*) "a weekly review like *The Age* that is Republican in politics and infidel in religion. It is worth a million dollars and it has made it since the war. The Democrats and the

South and Christian people will support a similar publication if it be Democratic and religious in its line, if it suits their views. This enterprise was started January 1. Already it has a wide circulation and has met a hearty recommendation from all parts of the country from Boston to Texas. The owners are to spend several thousand dollars in having the whole Southern States canvassed for it; and I believe that the establishment's fortune is made."

Page became proprietor of half this periodical easily enough; he merely signed his name to a note for one thousand dollars. The venture turned out disastrously. Page worked hard, writing editorials and book reviews and soliciting advertisements; but all his youthful energy and enthusiasm could not keep the paper alive. His hopes of arousing the South intellectually and exerting an influence on the murky political situation that then prevailed in the United States, came to an abrupt end. The disappointed editor returned to the Page homestead toward the end of June. All this winter Page had been half hoping that his native State might still find a place for him in the University. The institution was too poor, however, to branch out in any direction, and again Page was faced with the eternal problem of earning a living.

II

Page's life for the next eight months fairly illustrates the discouragements that confronted all young Southerners in the years following the Civil War. He spent the time industriously and patiently looking for a job, but had the utmost difficulty getting a start. He had definitely chosen journalism as his profession, and his own State of North Carolina as his field. He himself said, in after life, that he applied to almost every paper in North Carolina, and that not one of them would give him work.

He canvassed the newspapers of Louisville and Baltimore with the same result. Unappreciated as Page seemed to be in his own neighbourhood, he scored one almost startling success far away from home. He used part of his abundant leisure this summer putting on paper his thoughts on many phases of Southern life. Under the heading, "An Old Southern Borough," he gave a description of Hillsborough, a town only a few miles from Raleigh, the scene of many a childhood exploration. Page used the sleepy town as a sympathetic place for the exhibition of certain Southern types and the propounding of certain Southern questions. He portrayed the "old-fashioned" Southern gentleman, living in the past, boasting of the fine breeding of his State, quoting Horace and Virgil, reading "Mr. Addison" and "Mr. Pope," praising Scott's novels for their picture of a chivalrous civilization not unlike that of the South itself, spending much of his time discussing the constitutional basis of secession, entirely neglectful of the fact that the old order had passed. On the other hand, Page set forth the new type — the advocate of the reunited country, the eager proponent of a modern educational system and a South that should realize to the full its agricultural and industrial possibilities. The prevailing shiftlessness, the run-down condition of city and town, the worship of ancient gods, the narrowness in religious matters, the young man of promise who was compelled to seek his career in other States, the constant boasting of achievements in war, the general prejudice against "a universal and uniform system of schools" — all these things Page described quietly and so good-naturedly that his words could not offend even the sensitive Southern soul. He was only twenty-four when he wrote this article, yet it contains the germ of much of his after life. His philosophy of the "old and the new South" had been formed.

The audacious author put the finished product into an envelope, addressed it to "Mr. William Dean Howells, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, Massachusetts," and tremblingly sent it on its way. In a few weeks came that exhilarating moment in the life of the contender for literary fame — the moment when the first child of his brain achieves recognition. A pleasant note of acceptance and a modest check — Page would have been less than human had he not compared this treatment from far-away New England with his discouraging effort to obtain a start in his own State. In due course the article appeared, and the boy's excitement may be imagined when he saw himself, in the leading American magazine of the day, in companionship with John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry James, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and other great names.

Page's mind reverted briefly to the career to which he had seemed predestined — the ministry. The conventional ministry, of course, he had long outgrown. But could he not give up his life to preaching Christianity, with the supernatural elements left out? To the young woman who was now more and more occupying his thoughts, Page wrote a letter which definitely set forth his state so far as eternal things were concerned:

To Willia Alice Wilson

ᾗ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ὀφείλω[1]

Sunday, 4 January, 1880.

Do you remember, Alice, the little conversation we had one or two Sundays ago about the dogmatic interpretation of Scripture? I have much to say to you on that, very much. It was the one absorbing subject of my life's thought for a good many years, and it caused me much

[1] To whom I owe my soul.

grovelling darkness of mind, rending my very life asunder at times. And through it all, I was utterly alone. There was of necessity absolutely no companionship for me in that. The good people that I knew were all of one way of looking at such things — a way that did not seem altogether satisfactory to me. And, if I sought sympathy among "unbelievers," I did not find it, for they lacked *reverence.* I fought it out, and came to what the common phraseology might call a "*reverent unbelief*" — not an orthodox unbelief at all of the foundation truths of Religion and of Life, but of the orthodox interpretation of the Bible. It did not follow in my case, as people say is a necessity, that the standard of my life was lowered or my aspirations checked. . . .

But, even while I sit at the feet of the Master we all worship in common, and try to learn His lessons as reverently as others, His divinity and His Godhood in flesh seem but myths to me. I care nothing for them. Thus it happens, sadly to me, that to-day I may not speak to the people the blessing of the Beauty of Holiness, as I have struggled to see it all these years — what I should so much wish — for that too is my life-purpose, isn't it? For they require an "iron-clad" oath of allegiance to their own interpretations, and would stubbornly deny the possibility of my attaining to a righteous life without believing what I don't think true and don't care to believe — that Jesus ascended from the dead, and that but for his continual intercession we should be damned!

It is a deep sorrow to me — for to-day, as indeed it often happens, the old fervour and desire to preach has come. Would I could!

And I can, if I go away from my own people and join the Unitarians. I have often been tempted to do it. Why not? All that I should regret would be the necessity of being

expatriated. But I have half a mind to suffer expatriation for a season. . . .

Your W.

One of Page's friends, in whom he frequently confided at this crisis, recalls a long conversation on a winter's day, before a wood fire, in which the young man discussed his plan of becoming a Unitarian clergyman. As usual, it was North Carolina that he wished to serve. Why not organize a Unitarian church in Raleigh, with himself in the pulpit? This confidant, long-headed and practical-minded, showed no optimism. A Unitarian church in Raleigh would never do. The mere suggestion would start a spiritual disturbance, and Page would probably be forced to leave town. Compelled reluctantly to acquiesce, Page again turned his hopes in the direction of Boston, laying his project before Dr. Edward Everett Hale. Again the response from New England was cordial. Dr. Hale suggested that Page spend six months at Harvard, attending the lectures of Professor Everett; a scholarship would bear a part of the expense; after that he would be provided with a place in the Northwest. However, Page still hesitated. Perhaps it was the fear of wounding his mother that caused him to put the project aside, for certainly the sight of her favourite son in the ranks of the Unitarians would have made her unhappy.

All this time Page had been circularizing the country for a newspaper opening. He wrote an elaborate description of his qualifications, had it mimeographed and sent broadcast into hundreds of newspaper sanctums — again without result. In despair, he did what probably few beginning journalists have ever done — boldly advertised for a job. He selected as the medium the New York *Nation*, which, in the autumn of 1879, carried the following card:

WANTS

A JOURNALIST of experience desires an editorial position on a first-class journal. He is 24 years of age, a Southerner by birth, a scholar of thorough and special university training, has studied professionally the political and social problems of the day, and has had experience as an editor, having contributed to the press for five years, editorially, and as European correspondent, and to the magazines, the *Atlantic*, etc. Full experience given and specimens of writing shown, if desired. Best journalistic and academic references given. Address W. H. P. care of Raboteau & Moses, 58 Maiden Lane, New York City.

That a young man should seek this way of introducing himself into a difficult craft may seem surprising; it is more surprising still that the plan succeeded. "After trying in vain," Page said afterward, "to get work to do on any newspaper in North Carolina, I advertised for a job in journalism — any sort of a job. By a queer accident — a fortunate one for me — the owner of the St. Joseph, Missouri, *Gazette*, answered the advertisement. Why he did it I never found out. He was in the same desperate need of a newspaper man as I was in desperate need of a job. I knew nothing about him; he knew nothing about me."

Mr. James Burnes, who replied to this appeal, offered Page a salary of fifteen dollars a week, and a position as reporter in the stockyards, with such opportunities of advancement as his abilities might justify. The young man did not hesitate. He borrowed fifty dollars to pay his railroad fare to St. Joe, and in early February, 1880, was hard at work in his long anticipated field. Page came to a community in which he was totally unknown. It differed from any in which he had previously lived. St. Joseph was a bustling city of about thirty-five thousand people, attractively situated on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River; its location at the junction of important

railroads had for many years made it one of the great trading sections of the Southwest. It was thus the headquarters of much wealth and of some culture. Page fell into good hands in the person of James N. Burnes, the proprietor of the paper, a man who had much higher journalistic ideals than those prevalent in the West of that time, for he even aspired to make his *Gazette* not only a lively newspaper, but an intellectual leader in Missouri and the surrounding States. He took pride in a daily editorial page that, well informed and well written, might exercise a commanding influence in his region. That is probably the reason why Page's unique advertisement in the *Nation* attracted his attention. Mr. Burnes at once formed a liking for his young importation and quickly appreciated his qualities. For a few brief weeks, Page devoted his time to reporting the state of the cattle market, to running to fires and to following the trail of burglars and murderers; duties he performed with zeal and enjoyment. Soon he was promoted to more important and dignified tasks. The autumn of 1880 was a critical one in the history of the country; it was the period of the Garfield-Hancock campaign. Missouri must be held fast for the Democratic candidate, and Burnes — who had congressional ambitions of his own — and the *St. Joseph Gazette* must do their part. Page had been transported across the plains in the hope that he would develop talents that might promote this great end. Burnes was not disappointed; the result was that, five months after his appearance in the office as a cub reporter, Page found himself editor-in-chief of the *Gazette*. "You must not think my life a hard one," he wrote his mother, giving the record of his success. "True, I do hard work, but no harder than I have always been doing. And consider what I have already done. You remember I came here five months ago,

to a city where I knew not a living soul, to a country where I was utterly unknown — to take a very low place (even lower than I thought) on a paper. I have become acquainted with almost every man of any account in a city of 35,000 people and with many more besides. I have worked until I have become recognized as a force on the paper, gradually gaining more and more influence; until last week I was invited to deliver the Fourth of July oration before 5000 people; and until to-morrow I assume charge of the *Gazette* as editor-in-chief — the very foremost place in my profession in the city and in this part of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, etc. I think I have every reason to think I shall be well paid for my 'hard' life. Don't you? Only a few days ago, an old friend of mine (that is, I met him soon after I came here) — a Republican politician whom I have fought and a prominent and honourable man of influence, told me that he would rather have my chance than any other young man's in St. Joseph. 'You may depend on me always' he said to me, 'if you work prudently and patiently, for any help that I can ever be to you in your profession.' My place can be made one of influence. True, I am working hard and making little money; but isn't that always necessary? There *is* money in journalism in this country. And I expect to become comfortably situated one of these days. Now I can save only a few dollars every week to diminish my indebtedness. But it is vanishing surely, if not as fast as I'd like."

The last sentences evidently refer to that note for one thousand dollars which the young editor had given for a half share in the departed *Age* of Louisville, and which he was painfully liquidating from the savings of his minute salary. To accomplish this financial feat he was sleeping in a little room "on the hill," and partaking of

food at an inexpensive "temperance hotel." But he warned his mother against any fears that his life was not a pleasant one. In a few weeks he was head-first in the whirl of the Presidential campaign. That election was a struggle in which epithets played almost as important a rôle as logic and political economy; and Page, though he could write dignified editorials and produced scholarly book reviews, was also not unskilful in wielding the editorial bludgeon. "What a rousing political campaign we had!" he said afterward.

And he had other reasons for pleasant recollections of this sprightly town. Uncertain as was his future and modest as were his resources, Page embarked on another adventure — the one which he afterward regarded as the most successful of his life. The twelve-year-old girl of whom he had caught glimpses in the few months spent in the old Cary Academy had now become a young woman. Alice Wilson had herself left Cary soon after Page's departure for Trinity College; she had returned to her own home in Pontiac, Michigan, and here had finished her education. Though Northern born, and descended from a long line of New Englanders, her early years in North Carolina and her many friends among Southerners exercised their resistless spell. The fact is that after these childhood years in Cary, her life in the North seemed more or less an exile. In 1877, therefore, Miss Wilson returned to her old home on the Raleigh Road. She came to Chapel Hill in 1878 as one of the "normalites," and, like most of these seekers for knowledge, was chiefly attracted by the lectures of Walter Page. Other subjects than Shakespeare and the Greek tragedians occupied the minds of the young men and girls at Chapel Hill that summer. The renewed acquaintance between Walter Page and Alice Wilson developed quickly into an intimate friend-

ship, and, finally, into an engagement. As soon as Page found himself established in anything that resembled a permanent occupation, therefore, the marriage took place — in St. Louis, Missouri, November 15, 1880. Like millions of other adventurous Americans, the young couple started life with no capital except optimism and the deep satisfaction they felt in each other's society. Page was twenty-five; his bride was twenty-two; his salary as editor of the *St. Joseph Gazette* was fifteen dollars a week; yet the idea that they were tempting fate never for a moment caused the slightest rift in their happiness.

III

Page spent a year and a half in St. Joe, enlarging his acquaintance with the West, developing his editorial style, writing magazine articles, generally "learning my trade," as he himself said. Always rather unsettled, he began to think he had exhausted the town. To stay there, year after year, merely meant the repetition of a now familiar routine; life to Page was not a job, the earning of a living; it was an experience — the piling up of new facts, the constant absorbing of new scenes, new people, new ideas. When the summer of 1881 came, he felt the impulse of change. "I had done that kind of a job as long as I cared to," he said. "Every swashbuckling campaign is like every other one. Why do two?" Besides, his thoughts were reverting again to one of the great formed purposes of his life — the reconstitution of his native section. Up to that time he had seen little of the South. The only two States he knew at first hand were North Carolina and Virginia. The desire now became strong to visit the most important areas, to study them and their problems, and perhaps present the results to the American people. At

Willia Alice Wilson, 1879

Walter H. Page, 1878

the same time he originated a scheme for accomplishing it. At that day, forty-five years ago, the now familiar newspaper syndicate was unknown, yet Page's plan amounted to practically the same thing. This was to write a series of articles that could be published simultaneously in papers all over the country. The cost to each subscriber would be small, but the aggregate sum would more than compensate the writer. Page was unknown to such metropolitan journals as would naturally be interested in this enterprise, and could hardly hope to make a binding bargain in advance. But he solved this difficulty with characteristic courage. He wrote the editors of the *New York World*, the *Boston Post*, and the leaders of the American press about his plans, announced that he would periodically send in articles, and hoped that they would prove good enough to publish and pay for. With no more certain prospect than this, he surrendered his assured position with the *Gazette* and started on his new pilgrimage. He had only money enough to pay his way to New Orleans; he gambled on the success of his articles to make possible the rest of the journey.

His roseate anticipations were justified. He sent letters in duplicate to several newspapers, which immediately published them and asked for more. "Soon I was rolling in wealth," said Page. "I had money in my pocket for the first time in my life." The articles made a great impression on a public then actively concerned about the future of the Southern States. They were the finest descriptions of Southern conditions since the publication of Frederick Law Olmsted's books in the years preceding the Civil War. A few selections make worth-while reading at the present time.

Martin, Tennessee, July 2, 1881.

This is Dixie through and through — a town of which the town proper is no town at all, but only a mill, logs, lumber, goods boxes, barrels and dirt from the railroad ditches. On the outskirts of this uninviting centre are two rows of business houses, mainly of a single story and by no means of attractive appearance. In these twenty mercantile establishments the little capital and the less energy of nearly a hundred men are invested. Every store has a portico where a long row of goods-boxes are kept convenient for the knives of its patrons. Beyond the store in every direction for nearly half a mile residences are situated at convenient distances. Every home has its spacious yard of native trees. The business part of the town is as unattractive as it is uncleanly. The men are slow in their movements — not, however, "unresting but unceasing," but rather unceasingly resting. This afternoon (Saturday) the town is full of country people. Too many of the men are of that cadaverous expression which on the seacoast has given them the name of "crackers." Yet they seem to be very happy, as indeed most Southern country people are, and they greet one another with a genuine welcome, always saying "How's yer folks?" Not a few of them get a drink, but too few go to the post-office. On the post-office, by the way, is a proclamation written in a handwriting that suggests a howling wilderness. It proclaims:

"I hereby Notify all persons doing business in the town of Martin that is subject to A privalege tax to settle at once," etc.

"And as the warm season is approaching and the Health of the citizens should be protected," &c.

"J. M. Rigway, Mayor."

A prominent label on a box in the most pretentious store in town gives you to understand the contents roughly thus: "invelopes." You can seldom see a daily paper. The people are apparently not interested in what is going on in the world. A new idea now and then is needed. The lack of animation is oppressive. Even a heresy, if it be fresh and bright, would be a relief. You feel as if you wished to see some sort of an effort put forth — a discussion, a fight, a runaway, anything to make the blood "go pearter." These lazy merchants have no ideas. It is oppressive to try and talk with them. I asked one if there was any immigration to the country. "Don't know but there is a little. Some go to Texas. Two from these parts jes' come back. Didn't like the country." I thought it useless to try to explain my question. I visited a stave factory that has recently been put in operation. It contained valuable machinery in a wooden house filled with shavings, and the boiler was near by. Yet an insurance agent was vainly endeavouring to persuade the owner to insure it. Among the guests at the ill-kept hotel was a country physician from Kentucky who had much to say about politics and other general subjects. I asked him if he had read Mr. Davis's book.[1]

"What Davis do you speak of?"

"Jefferson Davis."

"Didn't know he had written a book. Not about the war?"

And yet we are solemnly assured that Mr. Davis's book will make a better feeling in the South!

Such are the unpleasant impressions made on the visitor by this town the first day; and they might remain for a week if he did not seek for another side of the life. And

[1] "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," by Jefferson Davis D. Appleton & Co., 1881.

there is another side, although it is not visible at first sight. Last evening I walked out to the residence of the leading man in the community, a State-credit Democrat, and a man of wealth. For several sessions he has represented the county (Weakley) in the Legislature. Entering his grounds, I passed through acres of native trees and what will soon be a paradise of lawn and approached a beautiful cottage. Everything about the place is neat and tasteful. The house is elegantly built and handsomely furnished; cleanly and well-bred children were playing in the hall and piazza; an excellent performer was playing on a sweet-toned piano and all the surroundings indicated not only wealth but culture. I was asked to have a seat on the piazza, the inevitable place of reception at a Southern home in summer. The evening air was as cool as spring and it was not difficult to imagine one's self at a villa on the Hudson. Mr. Martin is a man who knows the world. He is familiar with all the intricacies of national politics, is personally acquainted with the leading men of the State and of the adjoining States. He has travelled abroad and is in every way a gentleman of such information as you find in a metropolis. He is a professional talker. . . .

I asked Mr. Martin what he thought of Mr. Jefferson Davis's history and what was the feeling towards Mr. Davis in this section of Tennessee, which is not far from his home. Mr. Martin had not yet seen the book but he had read such extracts from it and such criticisms of it as the leading papers have published. His opinion is that it was well for Mr. Davis to give the world his version of the contest; simply because it is desirable for all sides to be heard with patience and candour. It could not be a history of the war, but only an important addition to the literature of the subject. In a great many respects he was never an ardent admirer of Mr. Davis, but in one particular he does

sincerely admire him — the man has been consistent throughout. He thinks Mr. Davis is generally held in high esteem mainly for his consistency. It is nonsense to talk about ex-Confederates thinking that they were wrong in 1861. They did not fight as if they had consciences that troubled them. And Mr. Davis is not alone in believing that the Constitution is on the Confederate side. "But," he continued, "if Mr. Jefferson Davis or any other man were to advocate the doctrine that secession is constitutional, morally right, practical or desirable now he would find no sympathy. That question is dead. Jeff Davis has not allied himself with new movements. Perhaps he could not, at any rate he has not. He is identified in popular estimation with secession and with nothing else. As a man having any influence now he had as well be in his grave. His book is valuable simply as war documents are valuable. But if the man could or would come before the people for their suffrage in the name or even with the memory of secession, he could not receive a dozen votes among my constituents for constable. Any young man would beat him. We have new problems; we must have young men to solve them. I believe that this is the sentiment of the whole Southern people. I know it is the feeling of this community and of the men with whom I am personally acquainted elsewhere."

I spoke of the assertion that had been made in the North that "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government" will revive a feeling in the South hostile to the Union. My informant again complained that the Northern ignorance of Southern affairs and of Southern sentiment that could fear any such result was the most hostile influence to a real union of the sections.

If the indolent shopkeeper down town is a basis for an argument to prove Southern sloth and stagnation, surely

this man and his like are a sufficient basis for an argument to prove that the South has character and a chance for progress. He inherited land, but he has made his fortune since the war by a diligent attention to business. But he has made more than money. His mind is as well furnished as his house. He talks with the fluency of a politician and with the exactness of a scholar. I am told that in every political contest many negroes who know him personally scratch their Republican ticket when they come to the name of his opponent. He employs many of them, he pays them promptly, encourages their schools and aids the deserving. Still, the contradictory character of the class of men to which he belongs is seen in this: they will make personal sacrifices to save the credit of the State, and do all in their power to secure a dignified and reputable government; yet they have not energy to advertise their towns and sections, nor do they make enough practical efforts to advance purely local interests. Think of a Massachusetts town or a Kansas town whose Mayor writes about the "Health of the citizens!" Yet three Southern men of as much real culture as individuals elsewhere smile and say, "Oh, well he is good enough for us homefolks." They will not make their town put on a decent and attractive appearance. They will not advertise their rich lands which are for sale and go begging for purchasers. They will not rise up in their might and give the country a prosperous business-like appearance. They are not as energetic in any work of public improvement as they ought to be. Yet Tennessee, even Western Tennessee, is progressive. About the school system and its growth, about the sure coming of more energetic men, I shall write later.

For now I must tell of an extraordinary scene which occurred this afternoon and to-night in this backwoods

"rebel" town of 500 slow Democratic inhabitants. There is no paper here but a religious weekly, which of course receives no despatches. About noon the telegraph operator said that a despatch had passed over the wires saying that President Garfield had been shot. The indolent shopkeepers were soon discussing the news and several private telegrams were sent to Nashville and to St. Louis inquiring about it. Late in the afternoon countrymen began to come in from all the region around to hear the particulars. "Will he die?" was asked hundreds of times. Every man of them expressed a personal sorrow. "A national disgrace," "A scandalous shame," were their own phrases. Little was said of politics or of parties. Mr. Garfield was President of the United States — that was enough. It was announced that the assassin was from Chicago. A dozen voices spoke at once the great gratification that the villain was not a Southern man.

At 8 o'clock to-night it was announced that the President was dead. Sorrow and humiliation were vehemently and universally expressed, and all hoped for the immediate execution of the assassin. It was an affecting scene to see weather-worn old countrymen so profoundly agitated — men who yesterday I should have supposed hardly knew and certainly did not seem to care who was President. They knew of the inter-Republican quarrel only in the most meagre and general way; some did not know of it at all. They did not think of the result as it will affect the parties. No man seemed to remember that the Senate would be Democratic, be the result of the New York election what it may. Yet I found on inquiry that less than ten of all the crowd were Republicans. The great centres of population, of politicians and of thought may be profoundly agitated to-night, but no more patriotic sorrow and humiliation is felt anywhere by any men than by these

old backwoods ex-Confederates. Yet their loyalty is questioned by men and journals that an indulgent and over-credulous public tolerates and feeds for slander.

The train on which I left brought the news that the President was still alive and would probably recover. It was an indescribable relief.[1]

Mobile, Alabama, August 9, 1881.

The sale and distribution of Mr. Jefferson Davis's "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government" has been somewhat slower in the South than in the North and West; and for a month I have found the subject comparatively a new one. The estimate made of Mr. Davis, and the judgment passed on his contribution to the historical data of the war, by the quiet representative Southern men that I have had the pleasure of meeting — is this of interest as a Southern topic? Certainly it has afforded an exceptional opportunity of discerning the current Southern thought on the Confederacy and its chief; and opportunely enough, if such a calamity had to happen at all, the attempted assassination of the President called forth from the same men peculiarly earnest wishes for the purity and dignity of our national government, and a strong national patriotism. No better test of Southern sentiment could possibly have been made than these circumstances have afforded.

Mr. Davis comes again into public notice, not as the representative of a living issue, but as a kind old gentleman who brings into the present valuable reminiscences of the past. Everywhere I have found that the intelligent men of the South have a very high personal regard for him. His acquaintances are proud of the pleasure of knowing him. Whatever he has to say about the past, about ante-

[1] President Garfield died September 19, nearly three months after this letter was written.

bellum politics or about the war, is listened to or read with eagerness and regarded somewhat as authoritative, at any rate as always worthy of respect; yet no one ever seems to think that he knows anything about the present. If he should say anything about living issues, he would excite only curiosity or perchance merriment. It is strange to see how completely he is regarded as a man of the past. It would be impossible to exaggerate this feeling. Time and again I have heard remarks of this import: "Mr. Davis, whether properly or not in the estimation of Southern people, stands for the old question that has been settled forever. He has been uniformly upright and consistent. He has with dignity disregarded slander and maintained a high personal character. Yet he is never thought of in connection with questions of the present, nor would he be if his political disabilities were removed." That is the prevalent estimate that is made of the man in the South. An attack upon Mr. Davis's character would arouse defenders anywhere in these States; to consult him on State or National politics would excite merriment. As a chronicler of the war he takes highest place of all, yet "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government" is not regarded as a history. It is merely an able statement of the question that was decided a generation ago in battle. Almost every cultivated man that I have met has subscribed for the book; many have already read it and many others are reading it. They praise it most frequently without qualification, except in so far as the old quarrel with General Joseph E. Johnston is concerned. In that inter-Confederate controversy the Southern public were and are on General Johnston's side. Yet the statement made by Mr. Davis of the constitutional question involved in secession meets with Southern approbation. It is nothing new to the older race of Southerners. Thousands of

men could have formulated it as well as Mr. Davis, and thousands agree with him heartily in maintaining that secession was constitutional. Yet they discuss the question precisely as they might discuss an historical situation detailed by Thucydides or by Macaulay — a thing that is interesting only as a matter of history. This position is no complaint against the amendments to the Constitution, for which many an ex-Confederate voted and to which many more gave their approval. . . .

Mr. Davis's home, "Beauvoir," from which the post office there takes its name, is pleasantly situated on the Mississippi coast. A tract of eighty acres surrounds the house, the most of which is still covered with the native growth of live oak. The front gate opens on the sand, only a few feet from the high tide mark. The house, like nearly all the houses of this region, is built high from the ground. A wide flight of steps leads to a wide piazza from which a wide hall leads through the house to another piazza in the rear. The single story wood house is as comfortable as a constant sea breeze can make any dwelling place on the coast. The place has a very lonely appearance; it seems a long way out of the world indeed. For a mile along the beach there are other residences, and five miles away is Mississippi City. But the melancholy moist drapery on the live oaks and the dead stillness of everything is almost oppressive; and the countryless gentleman, who must be among the most lonely men of the world, doubtless adds much to the feeling of solitude. A little cottage stands on each side of the house, in one of which Mr. Davis has been at work these five years on his "Rise and Fall."

The afternoon that I called, Mr. Davis was lying on a lounge on the piazza smoking, and Mrs. Davis was fanning him. When I approached, he arose, as erect now as when a lieutenant in the army nearly forty years ago, and re-

ceived me very cordially. In appearance he is precisely as represented in the portrait which is the frontispiece of the second volume of his book. The thin form and face and the grey beard and hair do not necessarily indicate age, nor would one imagine him an old man, except when his singularly clear voice fails now and then from huskiness, and when his step suggests the tottering that precedes decrepitude. Yet the period of decrepitude is not yet come; indeed it seems at least a decade away.[1] As all the world knows, there are few more elegant gentlemen or more interesting talkers than he. His conversation is singularly precise and deliberate, and his voice is a constant pleasure. It was that which had much to do with his recognition and swift advancement in political life.

He had many questions to ask about Boston and old Boston people. He spoke of his visits there before the war, and of men who were his friends. Of his book he had little to say, and seemed somewhat averse to talking about it. He has seen few of the criticisms that have been made of it. "Everything is in the hands of my publishers," said he; "I am not a book maker, and I know little of what the press is saying. Occasionally a friend sends me a newspaper or a magazine which he supposes will interest me. But I pay little attention to my critics." "My purpose," he said later, "was to state a great question in constitutional history, and I am anxious that the young men of the country should study politics from the original sources." Of the attempt on the life of the President, he spoke as has been quoted by the press — precisely as any other man would speak. He seemed much more interested in his vineyard and garden than in public affairs. He spoke even pathetically of his orange grove which the frost of last winter killed. "The trees had just begun to bear, and I am not yet reconciled to their death."

[1] Mr. Davis died eight years after these lines were written.

Mr. and Mrs. Davis now live alone. The youngest child, a daughter, is at school in Europe. They have spoken of going in the fall to accompany her home. "But I have lived here so quietly so long, that I do not know whether we will go or not," he said. Mrs. Davis is one of the most accomplished ladies in the South. She is his second wife, née Miss Howell. The first Mrs. Davis, a daughter of President Taylor, was the mother of Jefferson Davis, Jr., whose death from yellow fever in 1878 was such a blow to his father. Recently a large number of visitors go to Beauvoir — many of Mr. Davis's old friends, and many people who have curiosity to see him. He entertains his guests in the old Southern fashion with generous hospitality, generous cuisine, and generous wine.

It was a pleasant afternoon, a pleasant place, and a pleasant gentleman, surely; but can a visitor escape a certain depression? Everywhere in the South men are looking to the future. Cotton mills and railroads are of more consequence than battlefields where the fathers of this generation fell, or than constitutional questions which have been irrevocably settled. This man is identified in the public mind with no living subject; he is no present force. The tide could be heard lapping the beach when I went away. Presently the cars made the drooping oaks invisible and the moan of the breeze in the pines inaudible. A few hours later the warehouses and docks of Mobile were in view. As dull as their summer appearance is, the transition was as sharp as if a continent had been crossed. Had I not travelled over the two most progressive decades in the world's history? Back in one, Mr. Jefferson Davis is buried; forward into the other; even Mobile is seeking a fuller life; and Father Ryan himself finds that his neighbours have no time to weep. Besides, there is no cause to weep.

It may be of interest, by the way, to state that the coloured body servant of Mr. Davis who was with him when he was captured, is now jailer at Raleigh, North Carolina. His name is James Jones. "Jim," as he is universally called, has frequently told the story of Mr. Davis's arrest. Years ago he said that his alleged disguise consisted merely of a shawl, which Jim himself claims to have thrown over his shoulders. The negro's story is precisely the same as Mr. Davis has narrated in his "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government." Jim is a Republican, an honest and intelligent fellow, and he is always ready to defend his old master (he was, however, not Mr. Davis's slave) against slander.

Page always liked to tell this story of his visit, as a young man, to the President of the Confederacy. In conversation he added a few details which, perhaps from prudence, he did not include in his published narrative. The most interesting was Mr. Davis's statement that the United States could not permanently endure. Nothing was more inevitable, said the Southern leader, than that the American Union would split into several parts and go to pieces.

The next letter describes Page's visit to a Southerner of a very different type — Joel Chandler Harris, who had recently sprung into national fame with Uncle Remus, Brer Rabbit and other delectable immortals. This meeting, which took place when Page was twenty-six, laid the basis of a lasting admiration and friendship. Page's conviction that Harris had made a contribution to universal literature was one that only increased with time — and one that the world, after nearly fifty years' intimate acquaintance with Harris's plantation heroes, has apparently endorsed.

Atlanta, Georgia,
September 28, 1881.

Soon after my arrival at Atlanta, I began to seek an introduction to Mr. Joel Chandler Harris, the author of "Uncle Remus." I asked a friend of mine who knew Mr. Harris if he would introduce me to him.

"Harris?" asked he, "what Harris?"

"Joel Chandler Harris — 'Uncle Remus.'"

"Oh, yes, Joe Harris; and you've seen his book, have you? I understand Joe has made a good thing out of it. Hang an introduction! Just go upstairs, anybody'll point him out to you."

A prophet not without honour, etc., I thought. Evidently here in Atlanta he is simply Joe Harris yet. Entering a dingy doorway and ascending two flights of more dingy stairs, I entered a still more dingy room, on the door of which a dingy red placard was stuck, with this information: "Editorial Rooms." And there I found a dingy-looking individual apparently at sea in an ocean of exchanges, but quite calmly smoking a cigar, with the air of a man who owns the whole day and has no need of haste. I thought he must be the "devil" of the office, who was amusing himself with yesterday's papers before the gentlemen came down.

"Is Mr. Harris in?"

"Yes."

"I should like to see him."

"My name is Harris."

"I mean Mr. Joel Chandler Harris, one of the editors of the *Constitution*."

A sly twinkle came into the fellow's eyes as he arose and asked, "What may I do for you?"

"Are you the author of 'Uncle Remus'?" In such a moment of surprise Lord Chesterfield himself would have been blunt.

A little laugh bubbled up inside of him, he extended his hand, offered me a seat and looked as much confused as I felt. I must have said something about how much delight Boston people had got from "Uncle Remus"; for he said with a blush and much confusion, "They have been very kind to 'Uncle Remus.'"

It was impossible to believe that the man realized what he had done. I afterwards discovered that his most appreciative friends had this same opinion; that Joe Harris does not appreciate Mr. Joel Chandler Harris. From merely looking at him one must be pardoned for fearing that he could not keenly appreciate anything. A little man, just turned thirty-one, I believe, with red, unkempt hair, a fiery, half-vicious moustache, a freckled face and freckled hands; and there is nothing striking about him — what strange habitations does genius choose among men! His eyes are all that belong to Mr. Joel C. Harris; all other things, hair, complexion, hands, chin, manner, and clothes, are the property of Joe Harris. Genius has laid no claims to these very commonplace things. His eyes look straight forward at a man or at a subject and have the power of twinkling most appreciatively at whatever is humorous. He can't laugh a horse laugh, but a little guggling laughter shakes the chin when the eyes twinkle; and thus in some poor way the irrepressible humour of the soul, that itself has such a comical body for its dwelling place, finds expression.

"Uncle Remus" frequently speaks of "Putmon" County, "whar ole Missus and Miss Sallie lib." It was in Putnam County, Georgia, that Mr. Harris was born, a backwoods region where the light of civilization shone but dimly and is by no means effulgent yet. What he learned for the first dozen years of his life probably amounts to little, except the characters, the humour and the dialect of

the old plantations. No one could write "Uncle Remus" who had to go to work to learn the character or the dialect. Harris learned it as Uncle Remus himself learned it. Like all Southern children who lived on a plantation, his early associates, playmates, and slaves — they were all these — were negro children. It was in the huts of the old uncles and aunts on the plantation that all this knowledge which has been turned to so good an account, was acquired. It was a part of his rearing, a part of his growth. I had Mr. Harris's own word for it that he can think in the negro dialect. He could translate even Emerson, perhaps Bronson Alcott, into it, as well as he can tell the adventures of Brer Rabbit. But in the early days of his life, Harris, nor anyone else, ever dreamed of Uncle Remus in literature. He dreamed, however; and his dream was something better than the stupid life that fell to the usual country lad in Georgia, who had neither great wealth nor a great name to insure a career that would satisfy his ambition. He found his way to a printing-office. Somewhere down in that region a man published a little weekly sheet. There he learned to set type, first of all, but he was soon setting thoughts. Once he was printer, proof-reader, foreman, editor, pressman, and mailing clerk of the paper. And it attracted attention. Instead of stilted rhetoric, it contained pointed and humorous paragraphs, all done up in noticeably pure English. Publisher Estill of the *Savannah News* eight or ten years ago induced him to go to Savannah. Mr. Estill is one of the most successful of Southern journalists and he has made a fortune from his paper. But his weakness is in this: he can't distinguish an editor from an ordinary human being. He gave Harris work to do that was largely drudgery, and that afforded him but little opportunity. In plain English, Mr. Estill did not appreciate him. While at Savannah, Harris married an estimable lady of French-

Canadian descent, who brought a rich dowry of worth and love, but not of money, and, in the course of time, several bright children. The drudgery of his work, and the yellow fever, five or six years ago, drove him from Savannah and he came to Atlanta, it is needless to say, in poverty. Ever since that time he has been an employee of the *Atlanta Constitution.* This is perhaps the most influential paper that is published anywhere in the heart of the South, and Joe Harris has made it so. Not a politician in any sense, in one sense not a journalist, owning no share of the paper but merely working for so many dollars a week and for the first good opportunity of his life, he has made two distinct national reputations. As a paragraphist he built up the *Constitution* so that his minor editorials are copied from Boston to San Francisco. No one outside of the narrow circle of Southern journalists has known these five years that this was Joel Chandler Harris's work. When, therefore, his volume of folklore of the old plantation appeared, although nearly every story in the volume had been published in the *Constitution*, the whole English-speaking world bought the book and asked, who is this Harris? And editors who had for years copied his work, did not know that he was the "minion" editorial man of the *Constitution.*

Of course he is now appreciated by the owners of the paper in whose office his genius has unfolded itself. I have been told that he was appreciated from the beginning. At any rate, he now has a home of his own in a suburb of Atlanta and his salary is sufficient for his modest needs. Practical enough in many ways, he is, however, hardly more than an infant in business. It is said that he carries his money home to Mrs. Harris as a child might to its father, and she is the financier of the family. Fortunately for him, besides her other accomplishments, she is a good

practical manager of affairs. We who are his readers and friends (and all the world will one day be his readers, and all who have the pleasure of knowing him are proud to be called his friends) owe Mrs. Harris many thanks for taking care of him. It is understood that efforts have recently been made by other papers to buy him from this journal at Atlanta. But he will probably die here. Among other reasons why he will most likely never go away, is his own diffidence. He is as shy as a girl used to be. It confuses him to meet strangers. To meet strange ladies is one of the greatest trials of his life. Yet he is cleverer and quicker than any strangers, men or women, that he would be likely to meet were he to become a man of society. He simply doesn't like that sort of thing and is constitutionally unfitted for it. I have a fancy that he considers the formalities and compliments of society a waste of time. And he hardly conceals his scorn for the old aristocracy. You can find here and there in "Uncle Remus's" sayings a sly thrust at the pompous life of the Old South. Yet in spite of his diffidence and his scorn, he is a very great man. Although he will never be the aggressive party in becoming acquainted, he is fascinating. Although there are men in this city who have hardly ever heard of him, he has friends who are so proud of him that they delight in talking about him, and whose love is so strong that no sacrifice would be too great to make for him; and all this is based on purely personal grounds. The sweetness of the man's character is shown by the tenderness with which he cares for his mother.

When Harris first conceived the idea of publishing the folklore of the old plantation, it was in his mind a very uncertain venture. I have no doubt but he would, two years ago, rather have sealed a contract with a publisher of a story paper for a serial love story than a contract with

the Appletons to publish "Uncle Remus." He was not afflicted with vanity. The work was so easy to him that he could not believe it valuable. And, even when the book was so well received, he thought that he had simply made a "hit" — that's all. Not until the English critics passed high praise on it, did he begin to realize that he was already famous and had already made for himself a permanent place in literature. When I had the pleasure of delivering a message of congratulation from Mr. George W. Cable, he seemed greatly confused. I fancy that he wonders, even now, whether or not he can write anything that has real merit. But, with all his diffidence and modesty, he is ambitious and untiring. He works hard and reads much. There is little opportunity afforded in his volume of determining the range of his vocabulary and the felicity of his expression, except in the negro dialect. Yet there is, so far as I know, not another American journalist whose vocabulary is as pure and simple as his. He has read every great book whose author wrote Anglo-Saxon, to call it such; and, although he does not boast of any great scholarship, he shows the ripest fruits of scholarly training.

Mr. Harris is essentially a humourist. He thinks that he isn't and tries not to be. But that makes no matter; he is. As long as he lives he will most likely try to hold his imaginary "Uncle Remus" responsible for his humour, but he cannot succeed. It is strange that he doesn't like to be considered a humourist. His protest against this interpretation of himself in the preface to his volume, I am told, was meant to be serious. Yet that itself is humorous. It was the humour of the old negro that unconsciously attracted him — that humour that lies at the very bottom of the character. Beyond doubt "Uncle Remus" is a permanent addition to literature. What an addition it is! It would be interesting to review the attempts that have been

made for fifty years to embalm an old slave in literature. There are thousands of utter failures and the very fewest of approximations to success. Every one of them, Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom" among the rest, recede into insignificance beside "Uncle Remus." In him every outline is perfect. The old man's humour, his pathos, his whole unique character, is deftly delineated in the few preludes and interludes of his folk lore. What hand but a master's would have made the old man narrate his stories to a little sick boy? The old cabin is there, too, filled with a film of old cobwebs and recollections; and, in the background, the whole structure of Southern life is painted. Every touch is true, every tone significant. I may be too loving a critic, but to me it seems that no American man of letters has wrought his backgrounds and surroundings so skilfully, except Nathaniel Hawthorne. The humour and the tenderness of "Uncle Remus" which forever go hand in hand through life and in literature, are unmatched, unmatched beyond all doubt in any portraiture that Southern hands have made. The scientific value of the old plantation's stories may be great. But their literary value in Harris's handling is much greater.

WALTER H. PAGE.

CHAPTER VI

NORTH CAROLINA AND THE "MUMMIES"

I

PAGE'S letters from the South brought him an invitation to join the staff of the *New York World.* This was the greatest compliment that American journalism could then bestow. For many years the *World,* under the editorship of Manton Marble and William Henry Hurlbut, had been the intellectual leader among American newspapers. Afterward Joseph Pulitzer transformed it, introducing modern Western methods — methods that were enterprising, perhaps, and certainly, from the standpoint of circulation and profit, successful, but so new, so startling, so sensationally different from the Manton Marble standards, that the conservative newspaper readers of New York have hardly yet recovered from the shock. The *World* to which Page came in the latter part of 1881 was an eight or ten page sheet, marked for the modesty and good taste of its typography, for the scholarship of its well-written — and perhaps slightly ponderous — editorials, and for the restraint that dignified its every department. That the paper was somewhat on the decline and somewhat under a cloud, is true. The fact that a majority ownership had fallen into the hands of Jay Gould had inevitably injured its standing. Still the *World* was preëminently the "gentlemen's" newspaper of New York, and the day that Page became one of its company of urbane editors was a proud one.

The thought of establishing a home in the great city was also exciting. It was a modest home, but it was located in the financial, artistic, and literary capital of America. New

York was then a city of about 1,000,000 people — Brooklyn had not yet allied herself with the parent community — crude in its manners and in its political life — in certain respects almost uncivilized, but it was at least pulsating with vitality. The reading of Page's extensive newspaper writings of this period takes one back to an almost forgotten American era. New York was still a city of horse cars and horse-drawn stages, of overstrung telegraph and telephone wires, of un-asphalted streets, of "boodle aldermen," of ballot-stuffing Tammany ruffians, of Orange Day riots, of political torchlight processions, of eight-story buildings even then proudly known as "skyscrapers," of high bicycles, of Henry Ward Beecher, De Witt Talmage, Oscar Wilde "æsthetes" and the spiritualistic excitements of Ann O'Delia Diss Debar. The general character of American life, just emerging from the seventies, was as variegated as the prevailing fashions in clothes. Wasp waists, basque skirts, and bustles for women, toothpick pointed shoes, flat bowler hats, and skin-tight uncreased trousers for men — these things fairly pictured the early eighties in this country; they were as symbolic of its ill-formed political and social consciousness as the Rogers groups and lambrequins that represented the prevailing taste in interior decoration, and the mansard roofs and "cupolas" that pictured current conceptions of the beautiful in architecture. But in all this motley there were details more permanent and inspiring. On the stage it was the era of Booth, McCullough, Barrett, Mary Anderson, and Clara Morris — to say nothing of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, which occasionally had their premières simultaneously in New York and London; in literature it was the period of the New England wits, of Mark Twain and the most successful books of William Dean Howells and of Henry James — then in his least involved and most

American mood; in politics, along with many blatant evils, it was also the time of the rising star of Grover Cleveland, George William Curtis, William E. Russell, and of such jubilant causes as civil service reform. All these manifestations formed the basis of Page's writing; transitory as his newspaper pieces necessarily were, they provide a rapid view of the American scene in a somewhat miscellaneous and half-baked era.

His engagement with the *World* again started Page on his travels. His most interesting undertaking of this kind was a trip to Utah to inspect at first hand the behaviour of the Mormons. In this far country he let his whiskers grow, so that his appearance suggested a Mormon elder — a disguise that facilitated his journalistic inquiries, but produced a horrific impression, when exhibited at the office of the *St. Joseph Gazette*, into which he dropped for a friendly call on his way home. He also travelled, as *World* correspondent, with the tariff commission of 1882, a body called into existence by the Republican Congress ostensibly to collect data for framing a tariff law on scientific principles. Page, already a free-trader, had little respect for this enterprise or for its hearings, and he handled them without gloves in the *World*. The whole proceeding he regarded — and most observers agreed with him — as merely an attempt of the protected interests to settle themselves permanently in power. This experience had one practical result: it brought Page, for the first time, into personal association with a man who was destined to have an important influence on his career. In Atlanta, he visited an obscure lawyer's office to call upon an old friend, Edward I. Renick. Here he was introduced to Renick's law partner, Woodrow Wilson. The three spent a few congenial evenings together, and, at Page's urging, Wilson appeared as a witness before the Commission, advo-

cating free trade. In return, Page described glowingly Baltimore, and doubtless stimulated Wilson's determination to abandon the law, enter Johns Hopkins, and devote all his energies to the study of government and political institutions.[1]

On these and other trips Page widened his knowledge of the American continent — and that was their chief value. He spent his last year on the *World* as literary critic and editorial writer. Into this work he entered with characteristic zest, but a bitter disappointment awaited him. On May 10, 1883, all the editors of the *World*, including Page, received a courteous note from John Gilmer Speed, the general manager, informing them that the control and management of the paper had been transferred to Mr. Joseph Pulitzer. He forwarded Mr. Pulitzer's request that "You retain your present position at your present salary and on your merits as heretofore." Hardly one of the staff, however, accepted this gracious invitation. They well knew the restless, fiery spirit of Mr. Pulitzer and understood that the kind of newspaper he was planning was not the kind for which heaven had designated them.

This apprehension was not quieted when the editorial staff was called en masse for a meeting with the new owner. "Gentlemen," said Mr. Pulitzer, "you realize that a change has taken place in the *World*. Heretofore you have all been living in the parlour and taking baths every day. Now I wish you to understand that, in future, you are all walking down the Bowery."

The little band of newspaper classicists quietly reached for their hats and silently left the hallowed ground of the now extinct old *World*.

"The new management of the *World* newspaper," wrote

[1] Woodrow Wilson, "Life and Letters." By Ray Stannard Baker, Vol. I, pp. 144–48.

Page at the time, "has been generally very warmly welcomed all over the country and has received the generous wishes and hopeful predictions of the craft. It will be really the first great experiment to domesticate Western journalism. Certainly its recent lacks as a newspaper promise to be supplied, and doubtless the new owner will do what all his predecessors have failed to do — make it profitable. While everybody congratulates the newspaper and the owner on its change from Mr. Gould's hands and on his opportunities, there are not lacking men among its old readers who will miss the old *World.* With all its follies, it had for many years a rich scholarship and finished dignity such as no American daily can now lay claim to. The scholar will find its files the most learned and the most genial of all American newspapers. Its old editorial staff, before the gradual scattering began, which has continued for several years, was made up of a better class of writers than any other daily this country has ever had. Its essays and special articles, its literary criticisms and editorials, were classic. Not a man of the old staff — Marble, Hurlbut, Evans, Schuyler, O'Connor, Lannigan, to say nothing of its correspondents and occasional contributors — would have failed of distinguished success in literature. Not one of them belongs really to the new *World.* These gentlemen made what has often been called the most genial club in the metropolis. Their separation each looks upon as a loss of the goodliest company that ever kept late hours together. Meanwhile that which is yet successful journalism in America, that is to say, the newspaper full of news, rolls on and its orbit becomes larger."

And now Page, looking for a new field, turned his thoughts naturally enough in the direction of North Carolina. Though his American feeling was nation-wide, he still regarded himself as a devoted Southerner. He was

twenty-eight years old; he had two sons — Ralph, born in 1881, and Arthur, born in 1883; the time for a permanent habitation and a permanent life interest had clearly arrived. He had tested himself in many journalistic fields and had mastered the trade. What more worth-while place to practice it than in his own State? What part of the country needed more than the South such information and talents as he possessed? The misunderstandings existing between the North and the South greatly troubled this young man. The happiness and prosperity of both regions, he believed, were dependent upon a more complete reconciliation than had yet taken place. Without exaggerating his usefulness as a peacemaker, Page might justly think that his acquaintance with the North and the West had given him certain advantages in this great work of interpretation. His extensive observations had taught him how much the Southern States lagged in the onward march of American life. Could Page do anything to help usher in a new day? He believed that he could; at least it was his duty to try. There was nothing unctuous about Walter Page's desire to serve his country. The instinct was so natural that he never framed his purpose in so many words. Then and afterward, he disregarded his personal fortunes when a matter of social regeneration was involved, but the attitude was not a conscious one. His nature simply functioned. He could not be thrown in contact with any phase of life without having opinions about it or without seeking ways in which he could be useful. One day in the autumn of 1883, therefore, Page found himself on a railroad train, pointed southward. So far as he then knew he had abandoned Yankeedom forever. North Carolina was to be his home for the rest of his days.

II

Page himself has recorded the emotions with which he approached this new work. Nearly five years had passed since he had left his native State and he had not realized until this moment how unfamiliar it had become. "As soon as I crossed the Potomac on my journey homeward," he writes, "I was aware that I was coming into another world. A feeling of homelessness came over me, and I felt a doubt whether I really knew either of these worlds. I recalled a remark of a professor of history at Harvard, that these two peoples were radically different, that the folk of New England and the folk of the South would never wholly understand one another and would never be really one people. . . . I had forgotten even how sparsely the country was settled through which I was going. I had forgotten the neglected homes visible from the cars, the cabins about which half-naked negro children played and from which ragged men and women, drunk with idleness, stared at the train, the ill-kept railway stations where crowds of loafers stood with their hands in their pockets and spat at cracks in the platform — unkempt countrymen, heavy with dyspepsia and malaria. There had been a drenching rain and the roads, where I caught glimpses of them, were long mudholes. It occurred to me for the first time that this region is yet a frontier — a new land untouched except by pioneers, pioneers who had merely lingered until they had thought the land worn out and who thought that their old order of life — now destroyed by time's pressure of which the war was the instrument — had been the crown of civilization. Here was poverty — a depressed population, the idle squalor of the negro now that slavery was relaxed, and the hopeless inertia of the white man who had been deadened by an old economic error. . . . The earth itself seemed to revolve slowly. It

was another country from the country whence I had come. It must be accepted as it is, I reflected, and judged by its own standard. . . . At last I slipped back into my former self, and the stations and the long stretch of country became familiar to me as we came nearer to Raleigh; and I began to feel at home again, or nervously eager to be at home. I recalled my own impassioned description of the old red hills and the pine barrens. 'They once bred men; they shall breed men again.' And at last a patient pride swelled up in me that I, too, was a part of this land, had roots deep in it, felt it, understood it, believed in it as men who had come into life elsewhere could not."

And Page quickly adapted himself to his new — and his old — surroundings. A few months after his arrival he found himself established in a basement under a store, sitting at a pine table in a room furnished with a few plain kitchen chairs, at his side an upturned drygoods box on which reposed a selection of newspapers and miscellaneous documents. There was no other furniture; the walls were guiltless of ornamentation; the floor was uncarpeted, and, except for the occasional whir of machinery in the rear, Page himself seemed to be the only active thing on the premises. Huge clouds of tobacco smoke, spouting geyser-like from a corncob pipe, almost concealed the hard-working solitary figure. This was the editorial headquarters of the *State Chronicle* — a virtually extinct sheet which the young reformer had rescued from feeble hands, and, with the assistance of a little cash hastily scrambled together from his father and a few adherents, was seeking to make the mouthpiece of his new ideas on Southern improvement. Those who recall Page in these Raleigh days insist on the contrasting aspects of his sombre surroundings and the amiable and even gay demeanour of the man himself. He was poor; he was forced to live plainly on the

meagerest of incomes; the payment of ink and paper bills and the salary list of his little staff was a constant anxiety — yet surface discouragements like these never interfered with the serenity of Page's outlook or the solid purpose that was shaping his adventure. Poverty itself was no particular cause for gloom — poverty in the early eighties was the predominant note in the life of Raleigh. The merest glance at this little town of nine thousand people — half of whom were negroes — with its red-clay unpaved streets, little better than quagmires on rainy days, its squat and shabby business buildings, its decayed residential areas, and its general air of listlessness, in itself proclaimed the buoyant spirit of Page; who except an optimist would have selected it as the background for a journalistic enterprise on the highest lines? And hope and zeal were the qualities Page brought to the task. His office was not only an editorial sanctum; it became more and more, as time went on, the headquarters of talkative spirits, who dropped in to discuss the state of the Union, to compare plans for the solution of Southern problems, to ruminate on books and the arts, or simply to swap yarns and peddle gossip. Those who recall Page at this time remember, first of all, the laughter which constantly filled his basement office. That he had his moments of depression is true, but life on the whole was an enjoyable procedure. At least he had the happiness which comes to the man who is doing precisely the thing that he wishes, above all, to do. This, indeed, was the great point. The *Chronicle* did not represent an attempt to make a rapid fortune; Page's age was the age when idealism is likely to be most active; and not improbably the jubilant editor really believed that he could rebuild the State on Jeffersonian lines.

The newspaper — first a weekly and afterward a daily — that emerged from this subterranean retreat was a

revelation to North Carolina. Its physical appearance was strikingly different from anything the State had previously known. Its clean almost burnished surface contrasted with the poverty of its birthplace; the cheap newsprint of the period did not satisfy Page's ambitions, and he insisted on a quality of paper almost of magazine grade. He was more modest, however, when it came to headlines. Only on the rarest occasions did a "scare head" startle his readers. In general make-up, indeed, as well as in editorial style, the *Chronicle* was patterned after the old *New York World.* New as the *Chronicle* may have been in its format, it was even more so in its contents. It was well written on both the news and editorial pages — a fact not surprising, for Page wrote most of it himself; he even acted as his own legislative correspondent, and liked to take trips through the State, sending his observations in long letters. The whimsicality that was part of his own nature was frequently in evidence. Occasional pieces described events in his own life — his fishing excursions with his mother at Wiley Baucom's pond, stories of his grandfather and the "Old Place"; almost every week the Page clan at Cary could find scraps that recalled early days. Page was also fond of starting humorous controversies, such as his discussion, famous even now, on "the best way to cook a rabbit"; and more serious issues he could put forth in a guise that tickled the popular taste for fun. One of the most persistent of these "slogans" was his constant iteration that "the Frying Pan must go"; to the unremitting use of this utensil the editor attributed many of the evils of the South. Page never ceased arraigning the State for the tax it levied upon commercial travellers; he was more successful in this than in his attempts to reform Southern cooking; the "Frying Pan" has not yet "gone," but the unenlightened "drummer tax" long since disappeared.

These, however, were merely side issues: at bottom the *Chronicle* was pushing one of the most serious campaigns ever launched in this country. Page aimed completely to revolutionize North Carolina; to start that *Risorgimento* in its inward and outward life which has only recently become a reality. To take the State back half a century or more, to resume the thread of its development where it had been dropped when, like most of the South, North Carolina had been led astray by the agitation that finally resulted in the Civil War, to teach it to forget this unworthy era and to reorganize its life under sane, democratic conditions — to reënter the Federal Union in fact — such was the somewhat large editorial programme to which this youthful scribe had dedicated his efforts. The distant past of the South always beckoned to Page. He loved the fine old capitol building of North Carolina, standing only a short distance from his own office. "I think I have never walked through its cool halls," he wrote, "without taking off my hat"; it was a "noble monument of the early days of the Commonwealth, when men built institutions and houses with dignity." Above all it symbolized the fine Jeffersonian tradition in which the State was rooted. Certainly there was little in the surrounding atmosphere to encourage the great plan. In the year 1883, the thing that most impressed observers in Raleigh was its inertia. "If you were to go there now," said Page, "you would soon lose your reckonings. The sense of responsibility would slip from you. The days would come and go, every one like every other one. You would hear the same remarks made at the same time of the day that were made there at that time of the day in the years of your grandfathers. Your own emotions and sensations would become illusive and uncertain, and life an intangible continuity of a vacuous monotony. While he lives, a man may there

study himself dead — touch his own corpse and commune with his own suspended intelligence. . . . It's the clearest case of arrested development to be found in human annals."

What was the cause of this abnormal condition? It was the persistent idolatry of grievances, the constant living amid the ideas and the scenes of the Civil War. "Fifty or sixty years ago, our grandfathers (not the Old Man who lies beyond the box hedge in the garden of the Old Place) began a long wrangle about slavery and it waxed in violence until they thought and talked and wrote of few other subjects. Their opponents in the controversy had many other subjects to think and to talk and to write about — trade and the building of cities and the opening of new lands and the development of the people in many ways. Then the controversy came to the violence of war. It was the same old controversy about the same subject. And then came defeat. Whatever else defeat meant, it still meant the concentration of thought on the negro. Nor after he became free did he disappear from our fathers' minds as the chief subject of thought and of talk. From the minds of their opponents he was well nigh gone. He did not live with them. They had not suffered defeat. More energetically than ever they were building cities and settling new lands and driving trade and finding a healthful variety of occupations. And so for fifty or sixty years, the full working lifetime of three generations of men, we had had but one main subject of thought and of talk; and that was the subject which was linked with defeat and humiliation and the passing of the old order of things. Now if three generations of men think and wrangle and talk and write and fight (and how many died!) and suffer humiliation about One Subject — this One Subject only engaging them — may it not happen that the mind of a whole people may be deflected by such an experience and

that they may come to think awry about it and to feel unnatural emotions and to fear impossible things and to believe the incredible and to act without reason — on this One Subject? If this be so, then we have permitted ourselves in fact to be ruled — in our minds and actions and emotions and character and fears — by the One Subject. We had for three long generations been really ruled by the negro. And the Old Subject was uppermost to-day; so that men who would have heard our plea for training were hearing and would hear only the old negro controversy in a new form; for the negro yet dominated men's thoughts. He ruled us yet."

Had Page not been so young he perhaps would not have frequently adopted, in treating his great theme, the most dangerous of all weapons, though one in which he was especially gifted — that of ridicule. In its own mind, as he said, "North Carolina was a kind of Madonna" — to be worshipped, not analyzed, and particularly not to be flayed; it was so sensitive to criticism — as, in a large degree, it still is — that any discussion not pitched in reverence was unacceptable. For the most part Page's work was of a solid serious kind — portrayals of the State's resources, its almost untouched soil, adapted to a diversified agriculture; its water courses and water powers — almost unlevied upon; its mineral wealth, containing the possibility of an extensive industrial development; the noble inheritance of its people, sprung from the purest Anglo-Saxon stock. At the same time, certain blatant manifestations of a chauvinistic spirit constantly engaged his pen. The turgid oratory that filled the State offended both his sense of literary form and his intelligence. The constant insistence that Southern "civerlerzation," destroyed by the Northern armies, was "the purest and loftiest time had ever known," provoked editorial amusement and anger. The harping

on "chivalry," "beauty," "heroism," "the sacred dead," "devotion to the Southland," "President Davis," seemed to Page disloyalty to the National concept. The Confederate "colonel," constantly seeking office on the strength of his military career, his campaign speeches consisting of little else than descriptions of battle scenes, was Page's particular butt. Not only the "Frying Pan," but the "War record" must go — this was another of his catch phrases. He did not hesitate even to aim his shaft at the "fair daughters of the South," when these same daughters so commonly became a stumbling-block to progress. The money they spent erecting monuments to the women of the Confederacy might much better be spent, Page insisted, in building schools to instruct their illiterate children in the spelling book and in the English grammar. The clergymen who did their part in keeping the old issues alive were not overlooked. Week after week, Page kept busy on these themes — now seriously, eloquently, statistically — now pungently, wittily, mercilessly; North Carolina had never before been so angered, so jarred, so instructed, so entertained — all in a newspaper that was a model of neatness and good taste, written in English that was scholarly, clear and dignified even when most annihilating.

Where, then, was the hope of the State? There was only, Page believed, one reason for optimism — the young men. "What North Carolina most needs," he once said, "are a few first-class funerals"; sharp, perhaps unkind, as this phrase was, at bottom it expressed a truth. Away with the political colonels, the cheap editors who lived on race hatred, the antiquarian "cavaliers" busy worshipping a social system that never existed — and in their place let there be installed the new generation. North Carolina did not lack a small group of precocious spirits who eagerly accepted this advice. Naturally they gravitated to Page's

underground pulpit. At one time they numbered "seven" — a fact which led the old-timers to refer to them as "the seven foolish virgins." They called themselves the "Watauga Club" — though they were merely a flexible group, rather than a club, for they had no fixed habitat, sometimes meeting in the *Chronicle* office, sometimes at Page's home, sometimes, in a moment of brief prosperity, at a dining table in the Yarborough Hotel. Page's miscellaneous writings contain occasional references to this group of industrial trail-blazers. "When my home was in Raleigh," he said in a speech made in 1898, "there happened to meet in my office one evening a company of public-spirited young men, who said that there was something needed in education in North Carolina, that the teaching of books in the schoolhouse was well enough but that something more was needed. Out of these preliminary conferences grew a club in Raleigh, which has cut no great figure in the public eye, but one result, which I am happy to recall, is the building of the North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College." And, in a memorandum written at the time, Page defines the larger purpose. "Was it not our fathers," he says, "who laid the very foundations of this government, and was it not they who maintained its purity as long as its purity was maintained? Did our land not produce great statesmen when it had men great in no other lines of thought? In fact, we have a political literature that is the greatest literary achievement of this Western world. I have read Calhoun and Legaré and old Patrick Henry along with Burke and Demosthenes. It is all of the same pattern! Did you know it? Do you read Greek? Read for yourself the great speakers of Athens; then read Burke and Brougham and Erskine. Then read Calhoun and old Henry: it is the same fire they all have, the same thrilling, lifting greatness, on which our puny

thought may grow and wax strong. In statesmanship and in the building of a historical literature and in oratory, we inherit genius if nothing else. The everlasting curse of the unprofitable servant be upon us, if we fail to cultivate it! What we want is a reverent and conservative study of our political questions, as a preparation for an enlightened citizenship and as a basis for a political literature. How can we go about it? I have one very practical plan to suggest. The formation of a Social Science Club, right here in our Capital. What a field for original investigation — for associated and concerted research — is open to us! Not only the deeds and tenets of our ancestors, but the gathering of statistics concerning our present political and social questions. Here is a chance for the building of a splendid political scholarship and for the stimulation of a political literature. Let us wake up! I can count in my own personal acquaintance half a dozen young men of brains and energy who would welcome such a movement with joy."

Of the small group forming the Watauga Club — named after one of the westernmost counties of the State, famed for its vigour and its pioneering spirit — not one was more than thirty-six years old. The most active was William J. Peele — a retiring genius, scholarly, public-spirited, touched with the historic imagination, a man who, though the descendant of rich slaveholders, hated slavery and sought all his life for ways of mitigating the evils which it had brought upon his State. Thomas Dixon, a fiery gentleman, elected, like Henry Clay, a member of the legislature before reaching his twenty-first birthday, spent most of his time scandalizing the conservative lawmakers with a series of revolutionary bills — the same Thomas Dixon who afterward startled literary America with his romances and motion pictures of Reconstruction. Charles W. Dabney received, as a member of the Watauga Club, his train-

ing in the career of educational reformer that afterward made him President of the University of Tennessee; Walter Clark, later Chief Justice of North Carolina, Giles E. Leach, Charles Latta, were also enrolled among the Watauga companions. Afterward, Page phrased in a few sentences [1] the credo that inspired the Watauga group. "I believe in this land — our land — whose infinite variety of beauty and riches we do not yet know. Wake up, old Land! I believe in these people — our people — whose development may be illimitable. Wake up, my people! I believe in the continuous improvement of human society, in the immortality of our democracy, in the right mindedness of the masses. Wake up, old Commonwealth!"

The discussions of the Watauga Club and the editorial preachments of the *Chronicle* now simultaneously filled the State. Widen the opportunities of the common man — that was the idea that dominated all others. Teach him modern agriculture and the industrial arts; train him to be an expert manual labourer — a carpenter, a brick mason, an engineer, a technical mechanic; educate the picked sons in the higher branches and train the qualified for the professions; develop the resources of the State and stimulate its manufactures, so that it may no longer be dependent upon the North for all articles of daily use, from cradles to coffins. Train not only the North Carolina boy but the North Carolina girl; and — more radical doctrine still — train the negro. This little Watauga company were not frightened by the epithet of "nigger lovers" that was constantly hurled at them. They did not argue the rights and wrongs of the old times, nor dismiss the problem with proposals of colonization; they recognized that the negro was a manifest reality, and that the only wise statesmanship lay in training him to become an effective citizen.

[1] In "The Southerner," which contains much about the Club.

"The negro was brought here," wrote Page. "He will stay here. We must make the most of him. He is a burden and a menace unless he is trained. So, too, is the white man. But the negro is a child in civilization. Let us train him. That is our economic duty, our economic necessity. Let us teach him how to do productive work, teach him to be a help, to support himself, to do useful things, to be a man, to build up his family life. Let his women alone. Help him. He is docile, grateful, teachable. He is a man. Our civilization menaced by the negro? That's a lie and you know it. The only way in which the negro can be a menace to our civilization is by his ignorance. The State must train him. We must have schools to train every negro child to work — that's what a school's for. And we must have schools to train every white child to work, too."

Page's services to the South were largely as a sower of ideas; unpopular as his doctrines were at the time, they injected an electric current into the life of North Carolina that has revitalized the State. The Watauga Club long survived the *Chronicle;* in fact, in another form, that institution still exists. In recent years the State University, through its department of Social Economics, has been an active force in this work of social reconstruction. Its North Carolina Club conducts detailed investigations, setting forth the status and needs of the Commonwealth — its natural riches and its industrial opportunities, its rural conditions, its farms, its woods, its cropping system, its educational and housing requirements. These studies have advertised the necessities of progress in the remotest sections, and have stimulated much of the legislation that is rapidly placing North Carolina at the head of Southern States. The leader in this work, Professor E. C. Branson, proclaims himself a disciple of Page; indeed, he is accomplishing the same kind of work which Page initiated

forty years ago. The North Carolina Club is the direct descendant of the Watauga Club.[1]

There is another monument in Raleigh to Page's work there in the early eighties. This is the State College for Agriculture and Engineering — a large institution, with extensive buildings and equipment, enrolling several thousand students, all engaged pursuing those studies which Page advocated as essential to the rebuilding of the Commonwealth. This flourishing college is the child of the Watauga Club; and it was born in the *Chronicle* office. Before it was opened for students, however, in 1889, Page had left the State. His newspaper, successful as it was in starting the community thinking in new directions, could not weather its financial troubles. It was a splendid failure, for it fertilized the soil; its only serious fault, from the journalistic view, was that it was launched about forty years ahead of time. For nearly two years Page stood the disheartening experience of constantly sending out ideas that only a minority of the citizenship could grasp, and then decided to abandon the enterprise and seek his future elsewhere. Just what to do with the *Chronicle* was something of a puzzle. In his perplexity Page turned to a young man — he was only twenty-two — then living in the neighbouring town of Wilson, editing a country weekly

[1] "The outstanding purpose of the North Carolina Club," writes Professor Branson, "is to interest university students in the problems of the home State, to arouse them and prepare them for active participation in home affairs and to put them in way of growing into effective leadership in the life beyond campus walls. It is proper to say that such were the purposes of the Watauga Club in Raleigh, composed of Walter Page in the days of his buoyant youth, Chief Justice Walter Clark, and, later on, John G. Duggar, Alfred Haywood, E. C. Branson, Clarence Poe, and many other young North Carolinians who in the long ago dreamed of careers useful to North Carolina. Out of this club came many epoch-making results for the State. They need not be here detailed. I merely wish to record the fact that the North Carolina Club at the University is the offspring of the Watauga Club in Raleigh, and that the ideals and purposes to-day are exactly of a sort with those of the original club in the capital city in the boyhood days of Walter H. Page."

known as the *Advance*. A few months before, a fire in Wilson had destroyed the whole town. This enterprising youngster wrote an account of the catastrophe and rushed his "copy" to Page. That afternoon the *Chronicle* came out with a big "story" of the fire — a sensational "beat"; and Page was pleased. The name of this active reporter was Josephus Daniels, then, in addition to his journalistic activities, acting as stamp clerk in the Wilson post office. Page saw much of his brother editor in the next few months. Mr. Daniels especially remembers a long buggy ride in the environs of Raleigh. In a conversational pause, Page, apparently arousing himself from an abstracted mood, turned to his companion and asked, abruptly:

"Joe, did you ever hear of a man named Woodrow Wilson?"

"Never heard of him!" replied Mr. Daniels.

"Well, you will. He has one of the finest minds in this country. Keep your eye on him!"

Woodrow Wilson was then twenty-nine years old, and a rather lonely and little-known professor at Bryn Mawr College. Soon afterward Page presented Daniels with a book and asked him to read it. "There's one of the finest books on our system of government ever written," he said. It was the recently published "Congressional Government" by Woodrow Wilson.

When Page decided to leave Raleigh, therefore, he passed the *Chronicle* on to Daniels. Daniels ran it for several years and, in 1894, merged it with the *News and Observer*.

"I hope you won't starve, Joe," said Page, as he left for New York.

"No, I won't starve," answered Daniels. "I am living at the rate of $27 a month and I have $300 in the bank."

The one thing about the *Chronicle* experience that gave

Page any conscientious concern was that several of his friends had lost money in the enterprise. A letter to the present writer from Dr. H. W. Lilly, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, shows how he eventually disposed of this worry. "Another little incident," says Dr. Lilly, "is typical of the man. Some time in the early eighties, Page started a newspaper in Raleigh — the *State Chronicle.* Being without funds, he solicited from his friends subscriptions to the capital stock, to which I cheerfully responded. The paper was not a financial success. The matter had entirely escaped my memory and the stock certificate was somewhere quietly reposing in the junk pile, when, perhaps twenty-five years later, I received a letter from Page, saying that he had reached a state of comparative affluence and wanted to repay every dollar that had been invested on his account. And this he did, though an act not incumbent upon him nor desired or expected by his friends."

III

Soon after returning to New York, Page published a series of letters, which, in a sense, represented his valedictory to North Carolina and diagnosed its backwardness. These meditations caused a reverberation, the echoes of which can still be heard. They have always been known as the "Mummy Letters." They certainly show that Page, at this time, was utterly discouraged in his hopes for the regeneration of his State — and the whole South for that matter. If his personal experiences of the preceding two years gave a considerable sharpness to his pen, the feeling was not an unnatural one. The truth is that Page had every expectation, when he came to North Carolina in 1883, that he would spend the rest of his life there, and his disappointment was great.

New York, February 1, 1886.

It is an awfully discouraging business to undertake to prove to a Mummy that it is a Mummy. You go up to it and say, "Old Fellow, the Egyptian dynasties crumbled several thousand years ago: you are a fish out of water. You have by accident or the providence of God got a long way out of your time. This is America. The Old Kings are forgotten, and this is the year 1886, in the calendar of a Christ whose people had not even gone to Egypt when you died." The old thing grins that grin which death set on its solemn features when the world was young; and your task is so pitiful that even the humour of it is gone.

Give it up! It can't be done. We all think when we are young that we can do something with the Mummies. But the Mummy is a solemn fact, and it differs from all other things (except stones) in this — it lasts forever. They don't want an industrial school. That means a new idea and a new idea is death to the supremacy of the Mummies. Let 'em alone. The world must have some corner in it where men can sleep and sleep and dream and dream, and North Carolina is as good a spot for that as any. There is not a man whose residence is in the State who is recognized by the world as an authority on anything. Since time began, no man or no woman who lived there has ever written a book that has taken a place in the permanent literature of the country. Not a man has ever lived and worked there who fills twenty-five pages in any history of the United States. Not a scientific discovery has been made and worked out and kept its home in North Carolina that has ever become famous for the good it did the world. It is the laughing stock among the States.

Yet we love it and praise it. Some pitiful little Mummy with more rhetoric than knowledge will probably quote

what I have just written, and beginning with the Mecklenburg declaration he will mention all the facts we boast of and prove that the centre of civilization is on the square foot of God's sod that holds him. We all know the story. James C. Dobin long ago told it better than any of them can now tell it. See the old "North Carolina Reader." It is a great State!

Mr. Patrick, you say, in three years has brought one hundred and thirteen people into the State. Within the last six years more than one hundred and thirteen men of ambition and brains and patriotism — educated, well-trained men of ability who are succeeding elsewhere — have gone away. I know perhaps as many as fifty myself in the few years over which my acquaintance extends.

The most of the most active and useful and energetic men born in North Carolina have gone away. They are in Louisiana, Texas, Illinois, Washington, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts — every one of them doing himself credit and making a place for himself against the fiercest competition among strangers. So it has always been. The greatest men that were ever born in the State — the Presidents [1] we boast about and a large number of those whose names are on tablets in Memorial Hall at Chapel Hill — went away from their old homes for freer air and better chances. Why? The Mummies! That's why. Even with our material advancement of late years, there is no appreciation of scholarship, no chance for intellectual growth. Old Governor Swain didn't want the railroad to go by Chapel Hill. We laugh at that now. Any man of ambition and industry who chooses and equips himself for an intellectual pursuit can win more friends, find readier appreciation of his work, make more money, wield a larger influence

[1] Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, Andrew Johnson.

in almost any other State than in North Carolina. Franklin Porter of St. Joseph, Missouri, Professor Wilbur F. Tillett,[1] of Vanderbilt University, Dr. Henry E. Shepherd of Charleston, South Carolina, Dr. Elliott of Johns Hopkins University, Professor Woodrow Wilson [2] of Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, C. F. Deems of New York, Frank Vaughn, the New York journalist — I could name fifty men in my own acquaintance whose careers prove that. The only men who could not earn their salt or be of any consequence anywhere else are most of the men who direct things in the State. When every intellectual aspiration is discouraged, when all the avenues that lead to independent thought and to mental growth are closed, when every effort to broaden the people into a great commonwealth that shall lead in the Union — every movement — is balked by the dead weight of these provincial and ignorant men, who are suffered to rule by heredity and by their general respectability in private life — there is absolutely no chance for ambitious men of ability, proportionate to their ability. We say easily that it is the fault of the times, of circumstances. It is the fault of the insufferable narrowness and mediocrity that balks everything.

Now I ask any candid man — if all this is nature? I have written precisely what I feel, having just read what the last *Chronicle* contained about the Industrial School; and I know that thousands and thousands of other men have the same feelings. What I have said is true — yet not wholly true, perhaps. There is a chance, I cannot help believing that. It is true that for twenty years everything that could be done to drive men away — such men as I

[1] Page's old roommate at Randolph-Macon College, now Dean Emeritus of the Theological Department at Vanderbilt.

[2] In the early seventies Woodrow Wilson's home was in Wilmington, North Carolina, where his father held a pastorate. He also spent a term at Davidson College, North Carolina.

have mentioned — has been done. It is not true that men ought to go away if they can help it. The reason that Mummies have held the kingdom so long is because men have continued to go away. But it is true that any man who is educated and industrious can better his condition, physical and intellectual, by going to any other State in the Union.

The cause — the prime cause that is at the bottom of all this — is the organization of society, of trades, of professions — of everything — against improvement. It is not simply because we are poor. They were poor in Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia twenty years ago, poor as we are. Yet they are a long way ahead of us in giving every man a chance and in making intellectual and social progress.

There is another side and a sweeter side to it all. No candid man who has seen the world and knows the people of any part of it, will deny that the people of North Carolina are as good folks — in morals, in capability, in good heartedness — as the sun shines on. For my own part, I believe in them more implicitly than in any people I have ever known. They are in many ways superior in capacity and in character to the people in Missouri, in Kentucky, in Virginia, in New York. Take Wake County, about Cary — including the dark hole of Rhamkatt. There is a sturdy citizenship in the folks that live there — brains and character — that you will not find surpassed anywhere. Go down into the Moore County among the Macs. Any man who has seen those people admires, honours, even reveres them. Look in Raleigh itself. The men (and their women) who have done anything since the war — the mechanics, the merchants especially, such as the Leachs, the Stronachs, the Norrises, the Briggses, the Barbees, the Lattas and the Wyatts — you can extend

the list to hundreds — there are no better men and women than these anywhere on the globe. And it is so all over the State. Go down in Sampson County, and see what men and women are there. It isn't the people that are wrong.

Who is it then?

It is the Mummies. And the Mummies have the directing of things. Do you want examples? If you know anything you can name examples yourself. Count on your fingers the five men who fill the highest places or have the greatest influence on education in North Carolina. Not one of them is a scholar! Count the five most influential editors in the State. Not one of them could earn in the great centres of journalism $10 a week as a reporter. Go around all the leading sources of power in the same way, and you will see what is the matter. Yet when a man tells the plain truth because he loves North Carolina, the same fellows howl, "Traitor!" I will give you an example. Two journalists in North Carolina, of State-wide reputation, who have both taken the trouble to say I have in my small way been "an enemy to the State," and have become "Yankeeized," have applied for "Yankee" work on New York papers themselves, and their applications have (without their knowledge) been referred to me. I have made the best report possible of their abilities and breadth of ideas, and have taken the trouble to procure and show the best specimens of their work I could get. Their work has killed their chances in both cases. Their applications were refused — because they are neither scholars nor men who know modern things. Yet they are big men to-day in North Carolina. But they are Mummies. They will dispute a point of law with Blackstone. They look upon President Cleveland as a heretic. They judge men better than Shakespeare. They sling opinions of men's motives hither and thither in a dictatorial way, and rule by hered-

ity and tradition as absolute monarchs, as if there were now a divine right of kings. The misfortune is, nobody questions their right. Of the thousands of men who know I am writing the truth, not one in ten will say so publicly. Yet ask Augustus S. Merrimon, ask Julian S. Carr, ask Robert Bingham, ask Charles W. Dabney, Jr., ask E. T. Boykin, ask Benjamin F. Long, ask Rufus Barringer — these are men whom North Carolina has honoured and who honour North Carolina; or ask any man who has made his own way by his own independence and industry in trade or manufacturing, if these be not true. Men in North Carolina do not speak what they think, but submit (as no other people have ever submitted) to the guidance of the dead. I hold this to be cowardly. I think the time has come for getting at the truth, for independent action, for a declaration of independence from the tyranny of hindering traditions. In God's name, with such a State, filled with such people, with such opportunities, are we to sit down quietly forever and allow every enterprise that means growth, every idea that means intellectual freedom, to perish, and the State to lag behind always, because a few Mummies will be offended? It would be cheaper to pension them all, than longer listen to them.

The utmost reverence for all men that are honest and energetic, the profoundest faith in the capabilities of our people and the sincerest affection for the old home have dictated what I have written, and have written with soberness and with truth for intellectual and social freedom.

W. H. P.

New York,
February 8, 1886.

. . . The point I make is this — a man is not encouraged — not allowed to make a place for himself in North Caro-

lina by intellectual work or manly endeavour. The men and forces who rule society are opposed to intellectual progress. They do not welcome difference of opinion. They decry every original or independent effort. They discourage mental growth. Illustrate it in this way: North Carolina had a long start of Georgia. There were more men of brains in North Carolina fifty years ago than in Georgia. There was more work for men of high attainments to do in North Carolina than in Georgia. North Carolina has suffered no hindrance that Georgia also has not suffered. Yet to-day Georgia has more intellectual work to do and more men who earn their livings by skill and brains and advance society by original and progressive ideas than North Carolina. It has four or five great newspapers. It has rich churches. It has work for architects to do. It has more business for lawyers. It has men and women who write books. It has artists who illustrate them. It has waterworks in its cities, and pavements and great commercial organizations. It has thousands and thousands of ways for men to make their originality and industry useful to advance society that it did not have twenty years ago. They are growing in Georgia. In North Carolina we are in this respect going backward. Our great lawyers, great judges, great preachers, great editors, are all of the past. A man of force and intellectual equipment does not want a "place"; he does not want "help" from anybody. But he does want a chance. He does want appreciation. He does want companionship. He will not stand eternal abuse because he has ideas. He will not endure being regarded as a "traitor" because he differs with other people. Before he will do all these things he will go away — go among strangers and make a place for himself. That is precisely what North Carolina men have done for a hundred years. It is no new complaint. . . .

This is an entirely different question from the question of material development along certain lines. In that we are going forward. Our merchants and manufacturers are a long way ahead of their fathers. But in the general intelligence of the people, in the intellectual force and in cultivation, we are doing nothing. We are doing nothing in getting more liberal ideas, a broader view of the world. The result is, men of intellectual ambition do not stay there. If a man's purpose in life is to make money, he ought to go to North Carolina. But there are men (and they are very useful men, too) who value other things beside money — intellectual growth, freedom of opinion, books, stimulation, progress, influence for good and such like things. A man who works for those things can work better in Georgia, in Tennessee, in Virginia, in Texas, than in North Carolina. . . .

Here is the thing in a nutshell: We have a State and a people second in capacity to none in the Union, a State that we all love more fervently even than Judge Gaston sang in "The Old North State," a people proud of themselves and that other people are proud of. More than that, in spite of the incalculable hindrance of a ruling force of dead and now malodorous traditions, our business men have done themselves everlasting honour by the material advancement the State is making. Yet in spite of all these things, the presumptuous powers of ignorance, heredity, decayed respectability and stagnation that control public action and public expression are absolutely leading us backward intellectually. If any is offended, then him have I described.

W. H. P.

New York,
February 18, 1886.

I observed that a number of mis-statements about me are appearing in some of the North Carolina papers. Contrary to good taste and quite unnecessarily, I hope, but to make sure that none of my friends shall think I have so utterly changed my nature as to have become malicious, I beg just space enough to correct half a dozen of these mis-statements which, I see, keep growing, growing, here a twist and there a turn, until they have already become grotesque tales. I take them "in a lump" having no time nor desire to discuss them and I shall not have anything to say about them singly.

I do not think I have slandered anybody. Certainly I have never had anything but the highest esteem and praise for the hundred or more local newspapers in North Carolina, which are so full of all good old Tar Heel gifts and graces, such as truth, fairness, love for North Carolinians, 'possum hunts and all the good humour of healthful life; indeed I admire them the more because they have to fill both their own useful places and the places that there ought to be broader papers to fill; and to my brother editors in the State, I send my compliments. My latch-string hangs on the outside, gentlemen, whenever you can find it convenient to come to New York — we'll have a good time, too. Moreover, I am a citizen of North Carolina; I expect to spend the greater part of the next fifty years in the State at an editorial desk playing the same cheerful tune; my plans pecuniary, recreational, literary, culinary, domestic, and professional are all succeeding so well that I increase daily in avoirdupois and happiness and grow in grace, I hope, and certainly in patience; I am not conscious of a spite against anybody; I have no resent-

ments; and unless the Mummies are losing their temper I do not think I have an enemy in the world.

Those papers which have given currency to any of the serious charges I have thus denied or which have casually remarked that I am a murderer and a fugitive from justice, or that I have committed an assault on the State of North Carolina, will, I am sure, give me the benefit of this correction. Those journals, however, that desire to add a few more charges to the list are at liberty to do so. It is as good a way as any for them to prove that all that I have said about them is true. I accuse them of narrowness and ungenerosity. Forthwith they set to and show how narrow and ungenerous they can be when they try. They even outdo themselves to prove that I am right. Could gentlemen be more obliging?

What a spectacle the Mummy is! When anybody points a finger at him and says, "See the Mummy!" he solemnly wraps himself in the memory of the great dead, begins to sing "The Old North State," and cries out: "Strike me and you dishonour the memory of Weston Gales and E. J. Hale, and Judge Gaston and Judge Badger. You slanderer, you defame North Carolina!"

This reminds me of an incident of my boyhood. I went one night to a "frolic" in Wake County. There were lots of pretty girls there and it was a jolly time. But there were three old spinsters who had passed the period of their usefulness for such an occasion. A brisk young fellow with a keen sense of humour, who is now the father of a family in Wake, saw them when all three happened to be in a group. He leaned over to me and said: "Great Scott, ain't they out o' date — they wouldn't bring a quarter apiece in Utah." They heard him. They flew into a passion. They declared he had slandered society. They talked about all their old beaux, the offers they had had, and about the

beauty of their mothers in their day and of their grandmothers in their day. They had to find a reason for such slander. They circulated the report that he was "spiteful" because he had wished to dance with a certain girl that wouldn't allow it. For a month they talked about him and fished up explanations and, though he had simply told the truth and everybody knew it was the truth, he was berated by all the old women in the neighbourhood for breaking all the ten commandments. . . .

Gentlemen, what a pretty comedy it is! Everybody in the neighbourhood must be laughing at the old maids. If you have as good a faculty for laughter as I have, how we are all enjoying ourselves! Yet what a little matter it is! To-morrow it will be forgotten. In my own memory it finds no lodgment at all, even for to-day. We that work for a broader day, for a more liberal opinion, for a North Carolina in which intellectual freedom shall be encouraged and every man shall have as good a chance as men have in any other State and not be abused for it — we must not judge these, our old friends, too harshly in their anger. For my own part, since I have provoked them themselves to prove what I accused them of, I think it proper for me to say that I forgive them for all the mis-statements they have made or may make about me. It is not in my heart to have the least ill feeling towards any North Carolinian who really loves the State, even if he is an incumbrance and cannot comprehend the broader purposes of broader men. If our aims are high, our charity must be wide, else we should not be worthy of the more liberal time and the broader spirit that we strive for.

WALTER H. PAGE.

New York,
March 6, 1886.

When the last census was taken it was found that 293,505 persons who were born in North Carolina had made their homes in other States. Of these, 200,115 were whites who had gone away from the State of their birth and love; for nobody ever knew a North Carolinian who did not from the day of his birth to the day of his death love the old land and his kindred; and nobody ever knew one who was not proud of the State's history and traditions and who did not wish his bones to rest in its soil at last. Of the scattered abroad, then, 200,115 are whites and 93,390 are negroes. More than twice as many whites have gone away as blacks.

Now how many persons have come into the State to take the place of these 293,505 that have gone away? The total is 51,455, of whom 37,909 are whites. We have sent abroad more than 200,000 white North Carolinians and got in their places from other States less than 35,000. We are "out" then by this swap more than 165,000 good white folks besides more than 76,000 darkeys. Inasmuch as the average life of a generation is about thirty-three years, the most of this great army of folks have gone away since the war.

Why have they gone away? The large number who went to Tennessee of course represents a natural movement of population along an almost due western line. The same general tendency accounts in great measure for the large movements to Missouri and to Texas and to Arkansas. The numbers that have gone into South Carolina and Virginia represent the moving about of neighbours. In all these movements of population there is nothing strange.

But a close examination of these figures does show a good many strange things. Why is it for instance that

2000 more people have gone from our State into Virginia than have come from Virginia into our State? Our lands near the line are as rich as the lands across the line. Our State is less densely populated than Virginia, and our lands are cheaper. If there were any reason for a northward movement of population, we should have received a correspondingly larger number from South Carolina than we sent thither; but such is not the case; for there is not 300 difference between the number of South Carolinians who have come among us and the number of our folks who have gone to South Carolina. It looks very much as if our people ran away from home Northward and Southward and that folks both to the North of us and to the South of us had the tendency not to return the compliment. . . .

Now let us take into consideration all the Northern and Northwestern States that we call Yankee States. To these eighteen States 41,363 white North Carolinians have gone; and from them 3476 people have come into our State. Twelve times as many of our people have sought Northern homes as Northern people have sought homes among us; and by this swap (by which we have got a number of invalids and carpet-baggers) we have lost 37,887 good people. Now all these Northern States are much more densely populated than North Carolina — except parts of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Kansas. Their climate is not so good; their lands are not so cheap and fertile; competition is greater, and strangers to us live there.

Now let us compare our experience in this matter with the experience of South Carolina and Georgia — two others of the old Thirteen Southern States. While we have sent 41,363 whites to the North, South Carolina has sent only 8940, and Georgia only 8354. Yet Georgia and South Carolina each have a larger percentage of black population than we have. We have sent five times as many

white people to Northern homes as Georgia has sent, and received less than half as many in return as Georgia has received. We have sent to these Northern States more than twice as many white people as both Georgia and South Carolina, and more than all the other Southern States put together — except the border Southern States.

In other words, there are more white North Carolinians living in the most populous of the Northern and North Western States than there are people of all colours (men, women and children) in New Berne, Wilmington, Raleigh and Charlotte. The "Yankeeized" white Carolinians are enough to double the population of all three of these cities and leave a good many over.

There are the strongest of all reasons why our people should stay at home. They have a history they are proud of; they love their kinsfolk; they have plenty of elbow room, a climate better than they go to, land richer, and everything that nature can give more bountiful. More than all this, they all love the old land, and none of them except the mere adventurers such as go to the Territories and some of those that go to Texas, wish to go away.

Why do they go, then? There is but one explanation left. There is an intolerance in North Carolina that is oppressive. Men do not have the chances to rise in life that they have elsewhere — to learn trades, to pursue professions. They are not allowed to express differences of opinion from the narrow dominant opinion without having their motives questioned or their characters assailed. This reason will explain why so many of them have gone to Northern States; and this same reason will explain why so few people meanwhile come into North Carolina — why our own neighbours show a greater tendency to avoid us than we have to seek homes among them.

There is another curious fact. There are 23,934 more

women than men in North Carolina; and the ratio of men to women is smaller than in any other Southern State. In counties and States from which there is a constant stream of emigration, the women come at last to outnumber the men, always. It is so in New England. But Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut are many times more densely settled than North Carolina; but the excess of women over men is a greater percentage in our State than any other Southern State, or any other State in the Union, except these few New England States. This is proof that a greater proportion of young men — men without families — have gone away from our State than from any other Southern State — gone away not because our girls are not handsome, but because the men needed an atmosphere of freer opinion and better chance to succeed in the arts and sciences and professions than they had at home.

There is another absolutely conclusive proof that this is the reason why our people go away. The traditionalists who suppress free speech and dwarf public opinion have not had the same grip on the material development of the State that they have had on its intellectual development. The result is, the material development has gone forward with great rapidity. We have built towns by the score, made new industries — gone forward all along the line of material growth in spite of the Traditionalists.

Is it not time for a change of public opinion in North Carolina? The stagnant say not. But it does seem time that men who really love North Carolina had the courage to stand up and show their love for it by pointing out the cause of the State's backwardness and trying filially to remove it. Every man who does this will for a time, of course, be called a "traitor" and a "slanderer" and even his private life will not be held sacred by the falling gods, who curse when they are no longer adored. But should we

all not love the State enough to smile at this Mummery? It is time for free opinion in North Carolina, and broader thinking must be done! Is it not every man's duty, in the light of these facts, to do his utmost for the growth of all liberality in work and in thought — to encourage the useful arts, and all broad learning, and especially to make public sentiment in the State tolerant enough to welcome difference of opinion instead of suppressing it on peril of personal abuse? The Commonwealth and its capable people have been held back too long — how long too long! — by the narrow spirit which has driven them to freer States and kept the people of other States away from us.

We have much in our history to be proud of and Nature has given us everything to be thankful for. What we perish for lack of is men broad enough to quit their childish "controversies" and personal abuse and patriotic psalm singing and decrepit praise of ancestors they are unworthy of, and to build up public opinion and to broaden our thought.

WALTER H. PAGE.

Page failed to accomplish anything with the "Mummies" — he was too far ahead of events. There came a time — a good many years after his departure — when the Mummies no longer controlled the destinies of North Carolina. That young generation — representatives of the Watauga breed — whom Page had portrayed as the destined rescuers of the State, ultimately secured the upper hand, and began to mould its life in accordance with the new standards. The leader, and the man to whom North Carolina, above all others, is indebted for its new educational system, was Charles B. Aycock, immortal as North Carolina's great "educational Governor." At the time the Mummy articles were sent broadcast, Aycock

was a young unknown lawyer in Goldsboro, only recently graduated from the University. That they planted ideas in that hospitable mind is evident from the letter he wrote Page, at the time when the Mummies themselves were hurling brickbats at his head.

From Charles B. Aycock

Goldsboro, N. C.
February 26, 1886.

Mr. Walter H. Page.
Dear Sir,

I have been promising myself for several days to write to you expressing my hearty approbation of your recent letters to the "Chronicle." I have read with great pleasure what you have had to say and I feel it a duty in view of the abuse heaped upon you by the various editors of the State to say, what I know to be the truth, that fully three fourths of the people are with you and wish you God speed in your effort to arouse better work, greater thought and activity, and freer opinions in the State. I am glad to see it stated that you intend to live in North Carolina. Come back; but don't come until you have made enough money to live and fight upon it for at least a half-dozen years. I wish heartily that you and Joe Daniels had a round half million and were running a daily in Raleigh; it would be worth more to North Carolina than all the living and dead "Mummies" have been in a quarter of a century.

Yours very truly,

C. B. Aycock.

CHAPTER VII

"THE FORUM"

I

THE next few years of Page's life represent his battle with that divinity whom most men find so tantalizing — that is, success. Yet to Page success was no fickle or mysterious goddess; like most human procedures, advancement in life, if it came at all, was simple, direct, honest, dependent upon a few homely virtues, and not at all a triumph of the miraculous. When the struggle was over, and Page could view the several steps with detachment, he outlined the fundamental conditions in a characteristic letter to his sons. "Every man," he wrote, "who does anything out of the common suffers at some time a complete absorption in his task. At some time and for a period he does more work or more skilful work or more devoted work than others who do similar tasks; and he thus gains greater skill than others have, or a more intimate knowledge, or builds up a stronger enthusiasm. In some way he outstrips his competitors. And a lead or superiority once thus gained can with even reasonable industry and devotion be maintained.

"Men who do not suffer such complete devotion and absorption may go on in an even, commonplace way to a moderate success; but they will never rise out of the army of the common. They will always remain in the ranks, as, of course, most men do all their lives. You will find it an interesting subject to investigate — how thoroughly and how enthusiastically the successful men whom you know have thus lost themselves in zeal for their work. Take

Mr. A. or Mr. B. — any successful or skilful man, any man who has risen out of the common, and find out the facts of his working life. Then take another. Such a study of your acquaintances will reveal many intimate facts. And you will find the contrary true also. Inquire into the life of any dozen men who are indistinguishable from any other dozen of the barely successful and you are likely to find that hardly one of them ever suffered a complete absorption in his work; they have gone on at a conventional pace and they have overtaken only the conventional and the commonplace. Success has a fast gait; or she flies high; or she yields only after a long, hard siege. Use what figure you will, it means struggle, devotion, absorption, enthusiasm, the losing of one's self; and she is won in no other way.

"Yet there is nothing obscure about her, nothing difficult, nothing elusive. She travels in broad daylight on well-trod roads. She can be overtaken by any capable traveler, won by any ardent suitor. The philosophy of life that makes success a thing of mystery, an event of doubtfulness, an uncertain quest — such a philosophy gets its confusion from metaphysics, from imagined difficulties, from mere doctrines, as likely as not from introspection, always from some artificial and perverted view of life and work. So long as a man has only a languid or merely commonplace interest in his work, he can easily find explanations of the coyness of success. She seems to him eccentric, whimsical. He can easily mistake bad judgment for bad luck. Indeed they do belong to the same family. And as the ill-born assert great pride in their lineage, the unsuccessful often manufacture a philosophy that scorns success — call her a wanton, a fickle and absurd creature, subject to no law and to no reasonable calculation. The truth is that common sense, common honesty, common good judg-

ment, spurred on by uncommon enthusiasm or energy win success every time. And the important fact is she will be won in no other way."

Certainly Page, in these difficult early years in New York, gave an intense illustration of a man absorbed in his occupation. He left North Carolina in February, 1885, with just about money enough to pay his railroad fare to New York; he had no definite job in hand — there was nothing ahead, indeed, except his talents and his determination to work and to make his way; "I am dead broke," he said in a letter to his wife, whom he had left temporarily in North Carolina. He was that figure so familiar in the fifteen or twenty years following the Civil War — the hard-up young Southerner valiantly seeking to make his fortune in New York. Most of these adventurers underwent a severe ordeal; thousands collapsed in the competition of metropolitan life; practically all, being the sons of families ruined by the war and reconstruction and thus solely dependent on their own efforts, had a tough struggle to survive. Page emerged more expeditiously than most of his compatriots. He had previously spent two years in New York, on the *World*, and thus was not entirely unknown. In a brief period he was working at a variety of occupations. He secured a place as leader-writer on the *Brooklyn Union* — turning out one diurnal editorial, for which he received $1800 a year — very good pay, according to the newspaper standards of the time; when this stint was completed, however, his day's work had only begun. He contributed, at a furious rate, to many magazines and newspapers; he started a book on Southern questions; he launched two or three newspaper "syndicates" — furnishing articles on New York conditions and national politics; in fact he had become an extremely active newspaper journeyman.

He was therefore able, in a comparatively short time, to bring his family from Raleigh. He rented inexpensive quarters in Brooklyn, and here he liked to entertain his friends, new and old, especially droppers-in from North Carolina. His industry amazed them all, as well as his gift for combining work and hospitality. He would frequently keep at his writing into the early morning, puffing at his indispensable corncob pipe, stopping now and then for an argument, or even for a hand at cards. He sometimes talked while he wrote, like a carpenter planing a board. "There's nothing to it," he would say. "It's mere mechanical stuff; just a trade; anybody can do it." This was his reference to the literary and political notes which he ground out tirelessly for the *Nation* and *Harper's Weekly*. There was much in this kind of an existence to discourage even a man who had a particular aptitude for it. "From the standpoint of mere barnyard gumption," Page said many years afterward in a speech to authors in London, "it is absurd for anybody to start to spend his life writing. Gambling is more likely to yield a steady income. It is an absurd career and a foolhardy business. No man has a right to take it up who can avoid doing so." Page spoke from experience. The vexations of the trade he knew at first hand; the agony of penning laborious manuscripts only to have them returned he had many times felt; yet there is no doubt that as a young man he enjoyed the whole proceeding, even the gambling aspect of it adding to his delight. "I remember once," a friend recalls, "that Page invited me to dine with a business acquaintance, an outsider. Some deal between this man and Page was under discussion, which involved the selection of a man to take over a certain job. Page's friend doubted whether the man they had in view would have sufficient self-reliance to meet the requirements.

Thereupon Page exclaimed somewhat explosively and with a slap on his knee: 'A man who is afraid to gamble on himself isn't worth a damn.'"

That was the real expression of his spirit; and the fact that he had now staked his all on this new career roused his self-reliance — which was abundant — and made the grindstone a zestful experience. Page may have been forced to economize in living arrangements, but he was a happy man. At his daytime office in the red brick *Union* building, his appearance, according to one of his friends, was "hale and hearty"; and the evening would occasionally find him at a Theodore Thomas concert or at the Metropolitan Opera House. "I remember as a cub reporter in New York," he once said, "how Mrs. Page and I used to husband our pennies for weeks with a view to getting seats in the topmost gallery — and upon that evening at the opera we would live for weeks thereafter." The all-important fact is that he had what Charles W. Eliot enrolled among the "durable satisfactions of life" — a deep contentment in his domestic surroundings. "Well, we have lived very comfortably," Page wrote his father after a few months in New York, "enjoyed life very well, had even some luxuries during the winter. . . . There is no use in my trying to do anything down South any more. It proved disastrous every time. Here is the place we must live and I have absolutely no fear for the future. I do not think that I ever saw a summer coming when we were in better shape for it. I weigh 175 pounds; Ralph is an enormous fellow, almost as big as he is high. There is nothing Pagey about him. He will be a thickset heavy kind of man, and he has other traits than mere physical ones which he gets from some of his mother's folk."

There was one place in particular where Page had an opportunity of manifesting his interest in all things ter-

restrial. The Reform Club in those days was the gathering ground for a famous miscellany of metropolitan philosophers. It was organized — soon after Page reached New York — for promoting tariff reform and similarly improving causes. Its guiding spirits, such as Charles S. Fairchild, Secretary of the Treasury in Cleveland's cabinet, Charles R. Miller, editor of the *New York Times*, and John de Witt Warner, a New York Congressman who was one of the leaders of the fight for Cobdenism in America, quickly detected Page's interest and placed him at the head of important work. Few private bodies have exercised such an influence on public affairs as the old Reform Club of New York. The Club owed its origin to the ringing tariff message of President Cleveland in 1887 — it was established, indeed, as part of the machinery of persuasion to make that message the economic evangel of the Republic. Its membership embraced likewise single-taxers, advocates of electoral change and preachers of the merit system in the government service. No American organization was quite so repugnant to Republicans, who regarded it, and not without grounds, as merely the publicity bureau of the Democratic party. The most active agent in this persistent attempt to undermine protection was Page himself. Young as he was, he became Vice-President of the Club and Chairman of its press committee. In this rôle he developed great talent in the new science of "plate matter" and "patent insides." All over the United States thousands of country weeklies were only too glad to publish well-written economic articles — providing they did not have to pay for them. "Plate matter" was the invention of a noble genius who saw in this device the way to profit from the parsimonious instincts of rural journalism. Columns of "literature" were written in New York, set up and stereotyped, and large sheets of

metal, of newspaper size, were sent by the thousands into the provinces. The newspapers receiving these Greek gifts thus had a complete page — pictures and all — without the investment of a dollar. Page and his companions in popular education prepared an eloquent panorama of such material, pointing out the iniquities of the McKinley law, demanding the most murderous revision of existing tariff schedules and insisting, as a patriotic necessity, on the retention of Grover Cleveland in the White House. This group constituted the most widely read American author of the time — though, necessarily, an anonymous one. There was not a hamlet in the Union where Page's "plate matter" failed to penetrate. In a report to the Club, Page himself boasted that he had "millions of readers." All this, of course, was public service — without a penny's remuneration; it represented his night work, frequently into the early morning hours, after spending a hard day at his editorial office.

The Reform Club was also a place for food and conversation; in its most prosperous time it had more than three thousand members, and a fine clubhouse, at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-Seventh Street. At its lunch and dinner tables many of the most imposing figures in American life daily congregated. Here the bulky figure of its presiding deity, Grover Cleveland himself — then hardly fifty years old — could be heard denouncing his enemies — both those within and without his own party. Practically all the members of his two cabinets at one time or another found themselves at its board. The greatest American exponent of free trade, Professor William Graham Sumner, would occasionally come down from New Haven, inject a few staccato arguments into the talk, or exercise his wit upon the manufacturers who were seeking his deposition from the Yale faculty on the ground that, like a new So-

crates, he was corrupting the economic morals of the young gentlemen in his care. Henry George, whose friendship Page formed and whom he greatly admired, frequently expounded the doctrines of "Progress and Poverty" to a small group — even more eloquently than in that classic. There were other great men of the time, now almost forgotten — Everett P. Wheeler, Wheeler H. Peckham, William B. Hornblower, Henry Villard, Francis Lynde Stetson; and there were several young men, at that time unknown, who afterward came into conjunction under historic circumstances. A social favourite was a stocky, black-haired newspaper correspondent — in 1888 only twenty-four years old — from San Francisco, famous even at that time for his persuasive talk and genial companionship. This was Franklin K. Lane, then, like Page, scrambling together a living in New York by miscellaneous writing. A tall, quiet, freshman-like figure occasionally sauntered across the room; he was in his late twenties and had newly arrived from Tennessee — another sample of the "hard-up" young Southerner trying to practice law in New York. This was William Gibbs McAdoo. Another, just turned thirty, somewhat phlegmatic in build and correspondingly deliberate in mind, liked to drop in from Georgia. This was Hoke Smith, whose activity in blockade matters in the Great War afterward made no little trouble for Page. When these and others got together late in the evening, there was a sparkle not derived exclusively from the facts and figures in which the Club so largely dealt. Many comic aspects of its own campaign afforded entertainment. The joint debates conducted at county fairs throughout New York and other States furnished most incidents of this kind. The antics of Roswell Horr, whom the Protectionists produced on these bucolic platforms to refute such a tariff reformer as Wil-

liam M. Springer, kept the Reform Club in laughter for many months. Page himself never tired of relating Horr's famous remark to the gaping farmers of Ulster County. "Forty years ago, my friends," said Horr, arguing the benefits of the protective system, "forty years ago, you never put a knife in your mouth at table without seeing upon it the brand of Sheffield!"

Enlivening, too, were the occasions when the inner circle gathered in Page's rooms. An important recruit here was Louis Howland, afterward editor of the *Indianapolis News*, and perhaps Page's closest friend. Philosophy and human destiny and their relation to literature here commonly formed the topic of talk. The lighter and the deeper sides of ecclesiasticism also figured. Page liked to illustrate his opinion of the futility of much of the prevailing religious instruction by telling the story of a North Carolina clergyman who once spent the night with him. They walked together the next morning to the station of the Elevated, and while they were waiting for their train Page talked of the dearth of rational amusements among country people, the need of giving them suitable diversions. "Yes, I agree with you," remarked the clergyman, "and I have been thinking of supplying the want by improving our Sunday Schools."

"We were just about to step on to the train," said Page, "and I was so taken aback that I almost lost my footing."

But the quality that all recall of Page was his undismayed acceptance of life, his Lucretian evenness of mind when facing the Infinite. The mere circumstance that he could not solve the puzzle did not interfere with his delight in existence. The author who most completely satisfied this mood was Walt Whitman. This, indeed, was Page's era of Whitman worship. Much of Whitman he regarded as

poetic balderdash; he would mockingly recite Whitman's long catalogue of bodily organs and then ask, "Do you call that poetry?" Then by contrast he would swing into one of Swinburne's Atalantean choruses. "There you have poetry!" he would exclaim. But Page regarded the inner democratic fire of Whitman as perhaps America's finest gift to literature. And this feeling for the glory of life, even when its meaning was unknown, was the thing in Whitman that he liked to hold up to his little group. Mr. Howland furnishes a glimpse of Page in one of these moods. When poverty was pinching a little harder than usual, and when the future seemed altogether obscure, Page liked to pace up and down, filling the room with Whitman's hymn of self-reliance and composure:

Me imperturbe, standing at ease in Nature,
Master of all or mistress of all, aplomb in the midst of irrational things,
Imbued as they, passive, receptive, silent as they,
Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety, foibles, crimes, less important than I thought,
Me toward the Mexican sea, or in the Mannahatta or the Tennessee, or far north or inland,
A river man, or a man of the woods or of any farm-life of these States or of the coast, or the lakes of Kanada,
Me wherever my life is lived, O to be self-balanced for contingencies,
To confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents, rebuffs, as the trees and animals do.

II

The friends and topics of the Reform Club formed a stimulating background for the new work Page now took in hand. In February, 1887, he shifted from the *Brooklyn Union* to the *New York Evening Post*, then under the editorship of E. L. Godkin, but he remained in this new place only a few months, for an invitation presently came from that field of journalism to which Page had always regarded

himself as predestined. In 1885 a curious group in New York had started a promising monthly review, the *Forum*. The most important member was Mr. Isaac L. Rice, a philosophic German Jew from Wachenheim, who had become a successful worker in several fields — the law, education, authorship, and philanthropy. Mr. Rice had persuaded several friends and business associates to participate in his literary undertaking, which appeared under the editorship of Lorettus S. Metcalf — Mr. Metcalf having resigned the direction of the *North American Review* for this more inviting venture. The enterprise had not succeeded, either editorially or financially. Looking about for material to strengthen the staff, Mr. Rice — himself a member of the Reform Club — became attracted by reports concerning Walter Page. This new recruit entered the *Forum* office, however, not as editor, but in the more prosaic guise of business manager. For three years Page struggled to win a subscription and advertising patronage, but with indifferent results. The explanation was evident enough. Only one man makes successful a newspaper, or a magazine or a review — and that man is its editor. Unless the publication itself attract readers, the most efficient business management can accomplish little. By the early part of 1891, the *Forum* had reached practical shipwreck. Its owners faced the alternatives of suspending, or of making one more attempt under new literary control. Surveying the field, they decided that the most promising man was already a member of their organization. Page consequently became not only editor of the *Forum*, but the executive head of the whole enterprise — the owner of a substantial block of stock and a director. Page did not believe in combining business and editorial management except in those rare cases in which the editor could reign supreme. The new *Forum* dispensation

was therefore satisfactory. His real chance at life had come.

This "job," as Page always insisted on calling it, represented a new opportunity for spreading those doctrines that had been his since boyhood — the ideas he had first absorbed when, in the old days at Cary, he had pored over the three volumes of Randall's Jefferson. He had tried to make effective these ideas in his editorial adventure in North Carolina; now, however, instead of a single State, he had the Nation for a field; instead of his own unassisted pen, he could assemble the most vigorous thinkers in the whole country. "I do not know how much you have thought about it," he wrote his old preceptor, Daniel Coit Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins, "but to me it is clear that the greatest careers in the time that is coming will be the careers open to men who control this prodigious machinery of magazine making. The mechanic has just perfected it; money-getters have for a moment got control of it, and popular intelligence and literature, it seems to me, suffer now in consequence. Things cannot go on so. The scholar — the man of character and breadth and of trained faculties and high aims — must take it in hand: it is machinery too important to be left for the handling of any other class."

Few men have ever visualized so expansively the sweep of periodical literature. Page's magazine was precisely what its appropriate title implied — it was a forum, the public meeting-place from which the best-qualified could address the masses, inculcating thought and stimulating action along the lines of well-informed democracy. No other agency, Page believed, could so acceptably perform this task. "The big fact about magazines," he once wrote — "the big fact about them is this: The magazine in the United States is the best instrument that has yet been

invented or developed or discovered for affecting public opinion in our democracy. It gives the only way in which serious men can continuously reach the whole reading public. No newspaper goes many hundred miles from home. Every newspaper is, therefore, dominantly local. Few newspapers live longer than a day or a few days at most. But the magazines reach practically the whole reading people, and the better of them have a life of at least a month, and many copies are preserved and read much longer. A serious man, therefore, is now put quickly within reach of everybody in the United States — everybody who reads. And this is not only a great fact, but it is a new fact in the world — that the magazine is of universal circulation. The magazines have told the American people more about themselves in recent years than all periodical literature told them during the preceding century."

The newness of the American magazine Page liked to illustrate by a story concerning Richard Watson Gilder, whose brilliant editorship of the *Century* had been one of the chief influences in dignifying the trade. He once asked Mr. Gilder to write an article about the rise of the magazine in the United States. "No," said Mr. Gilder, "I don't care to do anything so personal." The necessity for up-to-dateness in an editor Page emphasized by repeating a remark made by Samuel S. McClure. Rudyard Kipling once asked Mr. McClure if he had read "David Harum." "No," replied this famous exponent of the contemporary interest. "Why should I? The man who wrote it is dead." A compliment which Page especially liked was paid him by a subscriber who criticized one of his editorials. "The fellow who wrote that," said the indignant gentleman, "is a country crank. He really thinks that Missouri and Wyoming are important parts of the United States."

That, of course, was precisely what Page did think. An editor who was up and doing — who travelled on railroad trains, stopped at city and country hotels, appeared one day in New York, the next in Boston, the next in Chicago, who lunched and dined with writers, scientists, politicians, statesmen, university professors — all men who were promoting progress — was something new. The old-fashioned editor was traditionally a somewhat crabbed figure. He sat at his desk reading manuscripts — most of them voluntary offerings; it was his main duty to weed from the daily mass a few for publication, supplementing his mélange with articles clipped from the foreign periodicals. Some one once described the old *North American Review* as "revolving endlessly through space"; it was this kind of impersonal editing that gave the effect of eternal prosiness. Page's conception of an editor was not unlike that of the talented group who founded the *Edinburgh Review*, as the organ of the Whig party and of liberal ideas. The editor was the man who gave vital direction to every page. In certain respects he resembled the head of a daily newspaper — of the Horace Greeley and Charles A. Dana brand. His ideas, his "personality," must be felt; he must have a "policy" of his own; his magazine, that is, must represent his own enthusiasms, his own interests. "There are few more exciting occupations," Page said, "than to try to interpret the present activities of a nation and to put them in proper relation to one another — and that is an editor's life work. . . . Such watching and chronicling and interpreting seldom bring fortune, never bring fame, always bring toil, but they bring also the companionship of interesting people; and (as I have observed) an ever-increasing love of one's fellows and an ever-growing faith in the masses of men."

"The first stage in the American magazine," Page wrote, "was a purely literary stage, graceful, dignified, pleasing,

inefficient. It brought nothing to pass; but that was in the day before American character and American energy found their own and America became the dominant commercial continent of the world. Things now are changed and new material has come. That new material finds its expression in the unprecedented, undreamed of, and incomprehensibly various, multitudinous and impressive activity of the whole American people. Have you ever for a moment thought — never in the history of the world, in no country of the world, at no period before our own, were there fifty millions of unceasingly labouring, highly developed, extremely intelligent men, living and working contiguously, such as are held within our territory to-day? That is a phenomenon absolutely new. . . . A man who does not believe up and down, crosswise and all around him, in the spirit of the American people, thoroughly, everlastingly and beyond any possibility of change — a man who does not believe in this spirit, in democratic institutions and in the eternal development of the character of the people under democratic institutions, ought to be hanged if he tries to edit a magazine; because if that spirit be not in his work, if somehow it does not pervade it everywhere, if you cannot see it between every line he prints, then his magazine is not worth having."

This, then, was Page's comprehensive purpose; and his methods were equally direct. He kept his finger on events; each month he drafted the list of topics that seemed most appropriate to his plan — the matters political, social, literary, scientific that insistently clamoured for attention. As a preliminary step, he thus created a kind of imaginary magazine — his ideal for that particular month; on more than one occasion he had this purely tentative title page put in type, as a final test of its interest. In the course of his editorial career Page thus planned hundreds of maga-

zines that had no existence except in this experimental form. The standing grief of his life was the repeated failure of every number to realize his preliminary draft. For he found his greatest difficulty in obtaining writers to carry out these ambitious schemes. Such were the problems that haunted all Page's days as editor and publisher. Each month he carefully assembled the men and women who were to give substance to his dreams. His letters to these authors soon became famous; Page phrased his request so skilfully, he proposed the subject in such detail, that the article, when it appeared, was almost as much his own work as that of the ostensible writer. "Woodrow Wilson once told me," says Mr. Bliss Perry, "what he apparently repeated to a good many men, that after Walter Page had written you a letter inviting you to prepare an article for the *Forum* and sketching the outline of the article himself, it seemed as if the article were already more than half done, so infectious was Page's imagination in picturing the future paper." This method was deliberate. Page did not regard a monthly review as the receptacle for the miscellaneous, uncoördinated opinions of a group of writers, brought together in haphazard fashion; to him it was the medium for setting forth certain carefully thought-out editorial ideas. A few contributors, like Woodrow Wilson himself, easily fell into Page's scheme; but the great task of enlisting the inevitable men always remained.

The clarity and sure-footedness with which Page approached his editorial problems was illustrated by his hatred of roll-top desks. He always used a flat table for his work and he insisted that all his subordinates should do likewise. The reason for his animosity was that roll-top desks contained pigeon-holes, and pigeon-holes were merely standing invitations to postponed decisions. They

provided the easiest way in which an editor's brain could run to seed. Page lived in the present; the habit of tucking away papers or ideas in the hope that they might eventually become useful he regarded as a means of clogging one's mind. He accepted Tom Johnson's definition of a good executive: "A man who acts quickly and is sometimes right." "There shall be no roll-top desks in my office," he said, "for in them even the most conscientious man can manage to pigeon-hole duties. The only place to put a good idea is into execution, and the only place to put a bad idea is the waste basket. Then your desk becomes your tool and not your master." When he came to the *Atlantic*, some years after the present period, Page was horrified to find the "Tin Box," one of the most sacred institutions of the place — a large metal receptacle full of manuscripts, the accumulation of years. He demanded that every one of these documents should be immediately returned to its author — the risk of losing an immortal piece of writing was not so terrible a prospect as this slovenly habit of conducting a magazine. "If you have a good thing, print it! Don't keep it locked up this way." This touched what he regarded as the first principle of good editing. "Always work for the issue in hand — never think of those that are coming afterward." Don't spread yourself thin. Cram the issue full of all the good stuff you have and damn the Tin Box!" He was always correcting another editorial fault. Never edit, he would say, for the particular group surrounding you. "Boys, never write for the approval of the fellows in your own office!"

"It would be easy," he wrote Miss Sarah Orne Jewett, returning a manuscript which fell into this error, "to fill our volumes with papers about subjects that interest small groups of people. But if it is to be preserved, it must avoid this mistake, however much, by avoiding it, it may

disappoint some of its best friends and become perhaps less interesting to them. I am, then, powerless, as long as I am convinced that the subject is outside the highway of interest."

For similar reasons Page always demanded that his printed matter should be readable. "Many a fool," he once said, "mistakes an important article for an interesting one." In his *Forum*, and in the other publications he edited, Page demanded that his letterpress should entertain even before it instructed. "The greatest difficulty," he wrote to Dr. Charles Nesbitt, a specialist in public hygiene, "is to make these subjects bristle with interest. A mere didactic little piece that points out plainly the most wholesome truths and gives the best possible instruction, doesn't necessarily fill the bill. Magazine writing must do more than instruct; it must charm. Sometimes it may charm by startling, but, whatever the method, it must hail the man on the highway and not only make him listen but make him eager to listen." "I am continually on the outlook for writers," he said to another correspondent, "who can write about the Mississippi River and put the article into as good literary form as if they were writing about the ancient poets and dramatists." And what were the ingredients of good writing? First of all, it must never be divorced from human associations. "There is nothing so interesting," Page wrote to one of his most prized contributors, Jacob A. Riis, "as a genuine piece of human experience. It is the basis of every really great piece of literature." "What I like about your writing," he said to his friend, John Muir, "is that I hear the very tones of your voice in some of the sentences." And to the negro philosopher, William E. Burghart Du Bois, who wished to treat the somewhat hackneyed theme of his people's progress, Page gave literary advice that influenced

all his subsequent writing. "You will find," he wrote him, "as you go further in your efforts at expression, that you will need to take as concrete forms of the great problem as you can find. Has it occurred to you that at Hampton or at Tuskegee there may be concrete material which would give you the best opportunity to find an expression for the spiritual and intellectual aspects of the problem? I do not mean to suggest an article or articles on the education of the race in any sense in which that threadbare subject has already been treated, but suppose you find at these places life stories and human experiences which illustrate in a striking way the lift from the old darkness of slavery into the ambitious life of American citizenship at the end of the 19th century — would not such definite experiences as these, if properly interpreted, really illuminate the whole subject in a way that no amount of theory or educational discussion or didactic commonplaces could ever illumine it? I have several times talked with Booker Washington about the possibility of finding some one to write what might be called 'Stories from Tuskegee.' These might be simple personal narratives of interesting youth, for a story of real human experience, particularly when that experience reaches over so wide a range as the step from the profound indifference of ignorance to a large ambition brought about in a very brief part of a single individual's life — this is a matter for literature."

And when it came to style — terseness, directness, simplicity. "I want the magazine intelligible," Page would say, "to the Kansas farmer's hired man's thirteen-year-old daughter." He loved one or two syllabled Anglo-Saxon words: no piece of his own writing, his staff insisted, was complete that did not contain the words "large," "task," "job," "helpful," "forward." There were almost only two words of classic derivation in which he indulged

freely, and these were constantly on his lips and pen — "constructive," and "democracy." Feeble, generic adjectives, that merely conveyed emphasis, he despised. He once wrote a mockingly indignant letter to an associate who, in his absence, had inserted the word "marked," as an intensive, before one of his nouns. He early established an "Index Expurgatorius" — a long list of words which must never appear in his magazine. Among these were all words and phrases in foreign languages. Even so distinguished a classicist as Professor Paul Shorey was not permitted to use quotations in Greek and Latin. "I have no right to fill the magazine," he wrote Mr. Shorey, "with matter that will be unintelligible to four fifths of its readers!" A sub-editor was once called into Page's office. He found his chief bending over a page of manuscript which the young man had himself submitted.

"What on earth does this mean?" asked Page, holding up the paper and pointing his finger at the expression "*bête noire.*"

"Why — literally, black beast — bugbear, I suppose."

"Then why under heavens don't you say so?" said Page, as he ran his pen through the strange words and wrote the English equivalent in their stead.

Page was the enemy of the diffuse. A college professor once came in to discuss an article on a rather weighty topic. Page agreed to it and asked how much space the writer wished.

"I think I can compress it into twenty thousand words," the academic gentleman replied.

Page smiled and said:

"Do you realize that the story of the creation of the world, the biggest thing that ever took place, was told in a single paragraph?"

His visitor saw the point.

"I think three thousand words will do," he said.

For the kind of writing that merely destroys, without suggesting any plan of improvement, Page had an aversion that was partly the reflection of his own cheerful temperament. He could be severe himself, when hitting positive abuses — his newspaper venture in the South proved that — but he never, in the course of his long journalistic career, pointed out a public evil without at the same time indicating the remedy. Unless a writer could do this, he insisted, silence was the more satisfactory course. "Several of your subjects," he wrote William Roscoe Thayer, "please me very much, if I may add one proviso, namely, that in reviewing these large topics that appeal to your imagination and appeal mightily to mine, you will keep rather on the line of hopefulness. I conceive that a review of things that have actually been accomplished of some value to mankind is not only interesting, but exceedingly inspiring; whereas, a review of poor humanity's dead failures is, after all, very discouraging."

To Joseph E. Chamberlin

September 30, 1896.

Dear Mr. Chamberlin:

. . . I am going to raise a friendly quarrel with you on one matter of minor importance, and that is this. In my philosophy of life a man is warranted in indulging in destructive criticism or in speaking in an apologetic way of any man, or thing, or work, only under the same sort of provocation that he would be justified in knocking a man down. I believe that the only possible future for American letters, the only chance for the expression of American national feeling, is in studiously avoiding a destructively

critical and most of all a sneering tone. The word "sneer" I did not quite mean to use. It expresses my meaning, but it expresses a great deal more. Now these remarks are brought out (and they are much too vigorous for the provocation) by the frequent recurrence in your article to the mere idle curiosity and lack of appreciation on the part of the American people of our own writers. The fact I cannot gainsay. All that you write is true, and yet I cannot help thinking that the way to induce American people to appreciate these authors is to exalt their authors rather than to abuse the people. In so far as it seems safe or my own judgment would approve, I should never let one line of destructive criticism get in between the covers of any printed thing that I controlled. It is never sympathetic, and I am constantly tempted to try my own hand at an essay to show that the present dearth in American letters is due to the abnormal development of our smart critical faculty, and our lack of sympathy alike with writers and with people in the mass. . . .

Mr. E. L. Godkin, the editor of the *New York Evening Post*, sent Page [1] an article discussing American democracy. It was brilliant, as were all of Mr. Godkin's writings, but its tone was so pessimistic that the young editor declined to give it space in his magazine.

To Edwin Lawrence Godkin

31 January, 1899.

My dear Mr. Godkin:

I very heartily thank you for sending your paper. I read it as soon as it came yesterday and I have re-read it to-day. The body of it — all that part of it wherein you ex-

[1] This was when Page was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

plain the British colonial system — fits into our schedules very happily; but (if I may write you frankly) throughout the paper, wherever you make application to our own conditions or tasks, you make the difficulties (as we think) so much greater than they are and give the whole paper so hopeless a tone that its publication would strike a false note for us. I think the box we've got into a pretty bad one; but if we cheerfully and hopefully go to work to make the best of it, I think we shall succeed. The only thing that I am afraid of is the continued estrangement of the intelligent classes who criticize and predict disaster and the men who must take these practical tasks in hand. I regard it my duty to give all help possible — not shutting my eyes to faults and dangers, but not laying too much emphasis on the difficulties: they are obvious.

Glad as I am at any time to have a paper from you on almost any subject that you would write about, I do not think that I ought to publish this one.

To Frederick Burk

October 20, 1897.

Dear Mr. Burk,

I send back the printed criticism from *Science* and your reply with a pencil mark on the margin of two passages. This fellow in his criticism of you has contented himself chiefly with the use of italics. Content yourself in reply with a bare, bald statement, made as if you were a creature without emotions and he a mere automaton. I believe you will find that such a bald statement will seem more satisfactory to you twelve months hence than the perfectly human, natural and well-deserved clubbing that constitutes the third sheet of your reply. If in your answers you stick simply to a bald statement, or in most

cases make no answer at all, you will discover after a little while that the very result you wish to bring about is brought about by these fellows themselves in their infinite jabber. Moreover, a man who shows a bad temper under legitimate criticism thereby gives visible demonstration either that the criticism is deserved or at least that by temper he is not an ideal man for a responsible position.

I congratulate you upon the continuation of this row, and the warmer the other fellows get, provided you keep perfectly cool, and generally perfectly silent, the better the result will be. . . .

In some ways Page was a difficult editor. He was no respecter of names or reputations; in considering the publication of literary matter, he thought of nothing except its value at the time. He would never print an article in his magazine until it represented the best that his author could do. "To write an article is one thing" — so reads a letter to a contributor with whom he was labouring. "To present a subject so thoroughly that no student of it can ever come to it without having to reckon with this treatment — that is another thing. For instance (to take a big illustration) — hundreds of men, Americans and Europeans, had written about the government of the United States: but when Mr. Bryce took up the question he made a book that for a generation or two will be identified with the subject — nobody can get away from it."

"Your friend," he wrote Mrs. M. G. Van Rensselaer, "whose article about 'institutionalized' children came first with a note from you, has written a good article as articles go; and she has an important subject. But she has yet done nothing better than 'to write an article' — a good article, I grant. Yet you will share my feeling, I am sure, when I say that I am tired of 'articles' — what I want is

a thorough study, thorough treatment of a few great subjects, so that further 'articles' about them will be unnecessary. Miss W—— has done so excellent a piece of work that I have written to her asking if she will not do it still more excellently. Here is a chance for an achievement to build a reputation on. To try in a letter to a stranger to explain the difference between an article on 'institutionalization' and an expression of indignation because of outraged childhood — this is next to impossible. I wonder if, when you see Miss W——, you will not be so kind as to tell her for me that there is a big chance here?"

Page had a high conception of journalistic ethics. That anyone should use the *Forum* for personal ends seemed to him little less than treason to his readers. The problem became acute after the election of Grover Cleveland in 1892. For this result Page had worked, both as chairman of the Press Committee of the Reform Club and as editor of the *Forum*. Immediately, gentlemen ambitious for office in the new administration appealed to him for "endorsements" and "support." Page brushed aside all such approaches; he had campaigned for Mr. Cleveland, not in the hope of reward for himself or his friends, but because that seemed his duty as the editor of an honest periodical.

To ——

April 3, 1893.

My dear ——

You no sooner get your feet on South Carolina soil than you at once, true to the traditions of the place, began to demand "explanations"; very funny, that! There is something crazy in that atmosphere. There is also something disturbing to a man's vision; you say of course it has not

been lack of time that has prevented me from writing. "Of course" is good — very good, when (you cannot possibly believe it in South Carolina, where time is as plenty as land is cheap) there are now more than 200 letters here unanswered. I have worked nights and Sundays, hardly had a dinner home in a month, have four drawers full of manuscripts, have gone two days at a time without seeing my children when one was sick; I have spent a week of nights on sleeping cars and have been in the doctor's hands myself — rushed as I never was in my life — with my own business which I am under pay and obligation to do.

On top of all this (I thank God for my sense of humour) comes out of South Carolina a demand for an "explanation"! All the while, too, I have had the most serious problem to work out that I have ever had, and not a moment for uninterrupted thought or planning. Yet "of course it couldn't have been merely lack of time." Against which truly South Carolina decision my years of candour (and I hope of kindliness) count as nothing.

True, I have been tardy, been anything you like to call me. But with true "chivalry" you don't call me anything; only demand an "explanation." Did you ever read "Major Jones's Courtship"? Half a lifetime ago I read it and my memory of it may be inaccurate, but it has a much more generous philosophy of life than the South Carolina philosophy. When the Major finally popped the question to Miss Kesiah and she said "Yes," he was so astonished (it was done so easily after all) that his breath was taken away: he fell back into the vernacular and told his surprise by saying —

"Miss Kesiah, well, I'll be damned!"

That is my state of mind precisely.

What I ought to have explained (and I should have got

to it some day) is this — I allowed requests for political letters to accumulate on my desk (they came in shoals about the time you left), until it dawned on me one day:

It isn't Page and Page's influence these fellows want (he hasn't any). It is the *Forum's* influence. Now the *Forum* is an influential thing because it has never brought its influence to bear for personal aims or ends, and I have no right to use it to get an office for myself, not to speak of an office for other people. I stopped right there. That is the proper view. You think of it and you will agree with me. I had already written two letters when I saw what I take to be my duty. I haven't answered one since. I have a hundred, I'll bet $10.

Am I not right?

I hold a place in trust: it is not mine to use for my own personal ends nor for my personal friends. So at least I regard the editorship of the *Forum*, and this stationery means that, of course.

I hope you success, if you want it, as you seem to. But there are quicker methods of suicide and quite as sure roads to the placidity of the quiet waters of idleness. I have never known a man that was a consul that ever did anything afterwards. The world whirls round and he never catches on. Get a brindled bull, rather, and plough.

Good luck to you. You'll get it, I have no doubt. When you come to sail, let me bid you good-bye, but damn your demand for explanations.

III

Page's political ideas in this *Forum* period — and, for that matter, in his whole life — are sufficiently indicated by his attitude toward two public men, both of them products of New York State, and both of them, at that

time, playing a conspicuous rôle in Federal affairs. These were Grover Cleveland and David Bennett Hill. Page regarded Cleveland as the greatest Democratic President since Jefferson. Despite his tactical mistakes, President Cleveland, in Page's eyes, symbolized the finest influences then at work in American political life. Senator Hill, on the other hand, mentally far more adroit than his rugged antagonist, represented everything that was debasing. Page's admiration for Cleveland was nothing new. Since Mr. Cleveland's emergence, as an honest and vigorous influence in the politics of a State that grievously needed these qualities, Page, like thousands of other idealistic young men, had chosen him as his leader. He was distressed that the South treated Mr. Cleveland so shabbily, and particularly that the only respectable voice in the United States Senate that reëchoed the Tammany attitude toward civil service reform — or "Snivel Service Reform," as the spoilsmen called it — was that of "Zeb" Vance, of North Carolina. "There was a base ingratitude," wrote Page some years afterward, "in the South's treatment of Mr. Cleveland. He invited the Southern States to return to a proper share in the government of their country. He was of the South's own political faith. Southern men sat in his cabinet. Yet the South turned on him with fury, and the coarsest personal abuse was his reward. Since then Southern influence in national life has steadily waned."

Mr. Cleveland's second administration, from 1893 to 1897, in certain respects disappointed Page, as it did many other admirers; the greatest test of a political leader comes, not when he is in opposition, but when he has a victorious majority at his back; and Cleveland's failure to hold this majority in line, and compel it to fulfil the pledges of the party platform, Page regarded as a public calamity. Yet

his admiration for Cleveland, and his belief that his career had uplifted American political standards — and uplifted them permanently — never weakened. "Mr. Cleveland," he wrote, "is remarkably strong as the leader of a great party in the opposition. He is not correspondingly strong as the executive of a victorious party. In one rôle he is heroic, in the other commonplace. He deals masterfully with men in large masses; ineffectually with individuals. . . . He has proved himself a very great leader in a large struggle for supremacy; but in the work of doing the task that he himself formulated he cannot even choose good tools. He lacks imagination. He is a plodding man. He cannot see dramatic effects. He cannot play the game of statecraft when the time comes for him to move men on the board. He cannot measure the effect of individualities on public opinion. He is like Jefferson in his clear discernment of great principles and in his knowledge just when to proclaim them with supreme effect. But he has almost the stolid density of his immediate predecessor [1] when it comes to the task of working them out. Not the least instructive lesson of Lincoln's career is that a really great executive must be a man of imagination, even of humour, if possible a man also of personal charm. These qualities of imagination and personal charm and 'magnetism' have in our own time carried through a long political career, brilliant if empty, a man who has no principles whatever. These qualities are by no means substitutes for the sterling virtues that Mr. Cleveland has. But they are necessary qualities nevertheless for a great President. It is a very proper demand that a democracy makes, that its enthusiasm shall be kept aglow even while its most tedious tasks are in hand. Else at best a President or a party becomes but a poor drudge. In a hand to hand encounter Mr.

[1] President Benjamin Harrison.

Cleveland's enemies get the better of him — the same enemies that on a large field he has time and again utterly routed. When the President becomes a drudge, so commonplace becomes even the high duty of the hour that popular enthusiasm wanes and the sorriest rogue can for a time play the rôle of a hero. So strut now Hill and Gorman.[1] To this extent the President has failed. But this much is certain — Mr. Cleveland is the only man now in our public life who has made a chapter in our political history that men of the next generation will recall."

Page regarded Cleveland's antagonist, Senator Hill, as the most dangerous manifestation in the public life of the time — because he possessed a high order of intelligence and ability unallied with anything resembling a moral purpose. "He clearly possessed every requisite for public life except character." In his own magazine Page described Hill and his companions — such men as Edward Murphy, of Troy, William F. Sheehan, of Buffalo, and Richard Croker of New York — as "geniuses of political depravity." "This is the record of Mr. Hill's life," he wrote, "and it reveals so clearly the elements of his personality that comment is scarcely necessary. Throughout the whole of it the same tendencies appear. From the beginning of his political career in the Third Ward of Elmira, down to the present moment, he has shunned not merely intellectual but decent society, and sought for intimates and followers among the lower classes, the tricksters in politics. While governor and aspiring to a Presidential nomination, he selected as the editor of his personal newspaper organ a man who had served a term in the penitentiary. He has seldom been seen at a social gathering or dinner in the house of an eminent or respectable member of society. Not a single conspicuous act in the interest of

[1] Arthur Pue Gorman, for many years Senator from Maryland.

good government or pure politics can be found in his career. He has been the first American politician to build up a political following and to base his hopes of political preferment entirely upon the worst elements of the population. He not only has not sought respectable support in constructing his power, but has openly defied it. When he was nominated for the governorship a few weeks ago, so completely had he cut himself off from the best elements of even his own party that the Vice-President [1] of the United States was the only man of either national or state eminence who ventured publicly to congratulate him."

It may have been concerning this article that Page once told a story. He took a proof-sheet to an eminent lawyer for examination as to possible libel.

"'Every word libelous,' said the gentleman of learning, 'except the *ifs* and the *ands* and even they are constructively guilty.' But no libel suit was brought."

A letter to his mother gives a glimpse of Page's personal fortunes at this time. It brings memories of one of the most terrible industrial and financial crises through which the United States has ever passed. It was written at the moment when the "panic of '93" had laid millions of American homes in misery.

To Catherine Raboteau Page

New Rochelle, New York,
December 19, 1893.

DEAR MOTHER:

. . . And so, it's another boy at Chris's! [2] If wars come, the Page family can make a noteworthy contribution in

[1] Adlai E. Stevenson, of Illinois.

[2] Mr. Junius R. Page, a brother — always called "Chris" because he was born on December 24.

the next generation. It puzzles me to know what Nature means by such a constant yield of sons to your sons. The Page name seems reasonably safe — sure to survive for several generations more at least. Well, my one girl is a jewel. You may keep that fact clearly in mind. She will be three years old pretty soon; and, except for the mistake we made in taking her into New York last winter, she has been all right from the beginning. If we were not so very poor this Christmas, I was going to make you a Christmas present that *I* should have appreciated, whether you would or not; for I was going to take Katharine in to town and have a big photograph taken of her. But that costs money; and the weather is bad for such a trip; children in town, in the cars and everywhere, have measles and mumps and diphtheria and I know not what. So that young miss stays at home and her grandmother gets no picture of her this Christmas.

Ralph took the town in to-day. He has been saving up his money till he had a dollar. He went to all the big stores (he was alone) and scoured the city for bargains. He brought home a lot of mysterious bundles, and nobody knows what they contain. He is all mystery and importance to-night, and he has two cents left. I wish I could get as much fun out of a single dollar.

But take it altogether, old Santa is pretty low of presents this year. He's had pretty hard times in this country, I reckon, and his reindeer are sort o' lean and his big bag sags somewhat from emptiness. Down in the horrid city, in fact, he'll do mighty well if he manage to get loaves of bread enough to go round. People are starving at a rate I never heard of before — the pitifulest scenes — O God, it is awful! I think a complete change of general doctrine and habit must take place. Every kind of man and woman has for years been flocking to the towns. Towns are the

worst places to make a living and to get a footing for any but the very strongest and most skilful. The rest, at a time like this, starve. I stayed in town for dinner to-night, so many people called to see me just before I ought to have come home. The last caller was an old college friend of mine, who thought he could make his way on New York newspapers. I asked him to dinner with me, and he ate like a famished wolf. He hadn't had a good dinner in a week. Another went off as a stoker a little while ago on one of the war ships to fight in Brazilian waters. "You'll get killed" I said. "Well," he answered, "I shall at least not starve." And every mother's son of them could grow enough potatoes in Moore County [1] and enough corn to live full-bellied. They've got to come to it and got to quit running to town. . . .

This reminds me of the *Forum* which keeps me ground down. But the reduction of price promises to be a very great success. It is a move that I have advocated for two years, but the others did not think it wise. It is the *Forum* that has given us bread and meat now for six years, and shelter and clothes to boot. Well, it seems now in a pretty fair way to make a fortune for its owners, and all my troubles now arise from my efforts to own too much. Just as some folks I know are land-poor, so I have been magazine-poor. But somehow (tho' I'll be hanged if I see how) I'll pull through at last — see if I don't. . . . Annie tells me that the *Sanford Express* got up a mighty howl and moan about something I had written.[2] That's good! Well, about the same time, Professor James Bryce, the foremost writer now alive on all such subjects and a member of the British Cabinet, wrote me a letter of thanks

[1] The section of North Carolina in which the Page clan flourished.

[2] Page's article, severely arraigning lynching, "The Last Hold of the Southern Bully," published in the *Forum*, November, 1893.

about the same article — from the House of Commons in England.

Sam Ashe, poor old man Kingsbury, old Wharton Green and such worn-out mourners and Jeremiahs (poor old souls!) — such as they are — of course they howl and whine whatever I should do. But the *Sanford Express*, God bless us all, who would have thought it? And how can I dare show my face again? I am heartily ashamed that in your old age I bring such reproach on the family and burden your declining years by causing the *Sanford Express* to belch forth its thunderous condemnation!

Thursday night,
December 21.

Well, I've gossiped a night or two, till I've filled the paper — all such little news and less nonsense as most gossip and most letters are made of. But it is for you to read between the lines. That's where the love is, dear Mother. I wish you were here Christmas: we should welcome you as nobody else in the world can be welcomed. But wherever you are, and though all the rest have the joy of seeing you, which is denied to me, never a Christmas comes but I feel as near to you as I did years and years ago when we were young. In those years *big* fish bit in old Wiley Baucom's pond by the railroad: (they must have been two inches long!) — I should give a year's growth to have the pleasure of having you here. You may be sure that every one of my children along with me shall look with added reverence toward the picture on the wall that greets me every morning, when we have our little Christmas frolics — the picture that little Katharine points to and says "That's my grand-mudder." The years, as they come, every one, deepen my gratitude to you, as I better and better understand the significance of life, and every

one adds to the affection that was never small. God bless you.[1]

WALTER.

IV

Despite the discouraging panic of 1893, when most publishing enterprises suffered varying degrees of misfortune, the *Forum* rapidly forged ahead. When Page took charge, its subscribers numbered about two thousand and its financial status was similarly languishing; by 1894 it had obtained a most substantial circulation of twenty-eight thousand, and the condition of its treasury was healthy. No review in either America or Europe had ever acquired so many readers. The great English monthlies, the *Fortnightly*, the *Contemporary*, the *Nineteenth Century*, printed editions of from six thousand to ten thousand, and in this country the *North American Review*, established for nearly a century, regarded itself as a success with about eighteen thousand. But the influence of the *Forum* extended far beyond its group of immediate readers. There was hardly an influential newspaper office in the country where its monthly arrival was not eagerly anticipated. Editors found in its pages material for the discussion of public questions, and its views constantly provided the "keynote" for editorial judgments. To name the list of its contributors would be merely to call the roll of the leaders in all phases of the national life at that time. The *Forum* was exclusively Page's own achievement; his greatest ambition was to spend the rest of his days at its head, reporting and interpreting contemporary history. Only one difficulty was likely to interfere with his plans, and it was a difficulty as old as journalism itself. The weak place in the *Forum*,

[1] The final paragraph of this letter is quoted in the "Life and Letters of Walter H. Page," Vol. I, pp. 8–9, but it is here repeated for the sake of completeness.

as in so many periodical undertakings, was its proprietorship. Few publications have ever presented such a contrast between editorial office and directing board. On one side Page, full of youth, fire, idealism, and energy — on the other a group of "business men." The stockholders of the *Forum* comprised two lawyers, a banker, a tobacco merchant, a fruit dealer, a ribbon manufacturer, a diamond broker, and a cotton factor. Most of these men were of foreign extraction and only one or two possessed any education or had a speaking acquaintance with literature. In the first few years of Page's control they showed no interest in the magazine. To them, the *Forum* was merely a commercial adventure in which their investment had turned out badly — and they contentedly left its management in the hands of an eager young man who gave promise of producing a more favourable financial balance.

But Page had the most far-reaching plans. The new conception implied an organ of public opinion on a more extensive scale than any publication had known. Page himself, by husbanding his earnings, had become the largest *Forum* stockholder except one; now he proposed to add a new group — leaders of outstanding rank in public life and the arts, many of them already contributors, who, as part of their association, should become co-workers — men whom he could depend upon for suggestions and advice. This new *Forum* company was thus to grow into a national Senate of intelligence and character and leadership, and the *Forum*, on a more comprehensive scale than ever, was to be the great exponent of the best type of Americanism. Among the men whom Page approached on this subject, most of whom became purchasers of *Forum* stock, were A. Augustus Healy, one of the richest and most public-spirited citizens of Brooklyn; Warren A. Delano; Oswald Ottendorfer, editor of the *New York Staats Zeitung*;

Dr. Elgin R. L. Gould, of Johns Hopkins University; Jacob A. Riis, writer and social reformer; Carroll D. Wright, Superintendent of the Federal Census; Richard Burton, the poet; Hoke Smith, Secretary of the Interior; Gilbert Parker, novelist; the Reverend John W. Chadwick, the Unitarian pastor of Brooklyn; Charles F. Thwing, President of Western Reserve University; and Woodrow Wilson, Professor of History at Princeton. In crises of this kind Page naturally turned to the great leader of his youth, Daniel Coit Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins.

To Daniel Coit Gilman

The Forum, Union Square, New York,
9 May, 1894.

My dear Mr. Gilman:

You have been so kind to me on several occasions that I take the liberty to come to you with my confidence and in quest of advice. I am in deep trouble and but for my sense of humour I should sit down and weep. . . .

Seven years ago I began work here without a dollar or an acquaintance that could help, to try to show how the mighty machinery of periodical literature might be turned to some real good use. It was hopeless — I soon found it — to try to get a dollar from the kind of men that it seemed to me in my juvenile silliness ought to be interested in such an experiment; so I went to business men. They risked the money; I risked my life; and the *Forum* is the result. Now men with money court me — when I don't want them. I now want men with ambition and brains and a knowledge of the English tongue. I have taken aboard half a dozen millionaires, and that is enough ballast. I now want a crew.

Periodical literature ought to be the greatest engine of

human progress. Yet, from the newspapers up, it is unsatisfactory to thoughtful people, and the reason is obvious. Every periodical that you can think of has some limitation to its public service, — in most cases the limitation of ownership. It belongs to a man or to a firm and somebody is interested in keeping the ownership or in keeping the editorship. Or, it has the limitation of creed or of party or of some literary fashion or other conventionality. The periodicals, therefore, yet but half serve the public.

Now the *Forum* has a chance to be an exception to this rule and to become the best periodical in America — to become, in fact, one of our greatest institutions. It is free. Nobody owns more than a small interest in it. It has no debts, and no obligations of any sort. It has no contract — not even with its editor. He has control only by consent of the owners, and he is ready at any time to lay it down when he cannot longer so hold it. It has a profitable patronage; it has a considerable reserve fund — all the money that it is wise to have; it is a thoroughly established property, and it has the lead of the whole motley crew.

Out of this situation a great institution ought to grow; for only one more thing is needed to cause a revolution of the greatest significance to turn on the *Forum*. The one thing needed is the active coöperation through ownership of a large group of the most fertile and public-spirited men.

Consider the making of a periodical; what is the difference between a fairly good one and a really great one? It is only the difference of personalities and ideas that go into them. This is so silly that it sounds silly to state it. But there is no secret about making a great magazine. You must have, of course, a good craftsman at the head of it, a man of editorial skill, of good judgment, of some courage and of character, but these are all common qualities and

with all these you will make but a fairly good magazine. The stuff to make a great periodical of is yet lacking; and this stuff is a prodigality of ideas — such as no one man has or can have. Ideas must grow about it with the very luxuriance of nature, must come to it from every quarter. It must have enough waste material to make all the other periodicals better than they are now. This requires more than the acquaintance and good will and casual suggestions of fertile men; it requires, to a degree, the identification of their personalities with it. Incidentally, too, the *Forum* may become, by this plan, a very rich institution; for if it had ideas enough and good enough ideas, its circulation would be multiplied beyond all present expectations, and it would become a property of enormous value. If the task be done well enough, the whole question of profits — and of very large profits — solves itself. Nothing is plainer than this or has been more clearly proved.

The making of a mere conventional magazine — like almost any now existing — is an easy humdrum task that satisfies no philosophic yearning. I had as lief make shoes or ploughs; and I had rather build houses. The whole "literary" superstition that buoys the men up who do this kind of thing is a juvenile illusion; or if they no longer have any illusion, they recognize it as a decent sort of craft — a craft like the making or the selling of "notions" — which yields a more or less easy living.

But to make a periodical take hold helpfully on the minds of the masses of earnest men in America and to shape them — this is a different thing. It cannot be done in a large way under the usual limitations of ownership and editorship, and along with side purposes. It must be done in the open by coöperation of many minds. Along the way I am working I verily believe there is a revolution in periodical literature. It may be far off, but it is in this direction. . . .

This, then, was Page's plan for his great experiment in independent journalism. And, at the first, it was a success. The times were hard and the original owners of the *Forum* were severely afflicted by the panic of 1893. They therefore cheerfully accepted Page's proposal to raise additional capital by selling stock to outsiders; they were entirely willing, they said, that his cherished association of *illuminati* should control the property. Page had sold shares enough to guarantee control when the ribbon merchants and the stockbrokers abruptly intervened. The old crowd suddenly awoke to the fact that the *Forum* was not only a great leader in thought, but a valuable investment. A career of prosperity and abundant dividends evidently lay ahead. This discovery caused the proprietors to change their minds. They hastily called a meeting of the directors and stopped the sale of stock. Instead of dominating the magazine, Page and his companions were thus left in the minority — and this after having filled the *Forum's* coffers with new capital. An attempt was made to persuade Page to desert his friends and vote with the commercial element. His answer to what he regarded as a dishonourable proposal was his resignation as editor of the *Forum*.

Such, briefly, is the history of one of the most sensational episodes in the literary history of New York. So far as Page's personal fortunes were concerned, the *Forum* calamity played generously into his hand. His departure meant promotion; for its result was to place him in the premier editorial chair in the United States — that of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

CHAPTER VIII

BOSTON AND THE "ATLANTIC"

I

PAGE had one characteristic purpose in his editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*. "I wish to get the magazine out of the New England rut," he wrote his old Randolph-Macon friend, "Bob" Sharp, at that time Professor of English at Tulane University. "It would be an interesting experience for you to come up here and look these thrifty Puritans over. There's lots of fun in it, whether there be instruction or not. Now I live right among them."

The *Atlantic Monthly* had long prided itself upon a succession of editors almost as distinguished as the American Ambassadors to Great Britain. Practically all these men, in ancestry and traditions, had been New Englanders. For nearly half a century the magazine had represented New England in its writers, its point of view, its literary tone, and conspicuously in its subscription list. This was perhaps inevitable for the first forty years of its existence. American literature, during that era, with one or two important exceptions, was almost exclusively a New England product. The first number of the *Atlantic* contained contributions by Emerson, Hawthorne, Holmes, Whittier, Prescott, Harriet Beecher Stowe — and these names, and the ideas and attitudes they stood for, gave the magazine its New England bent throughout its subsequent career. While the *Atlantic*, and perhaps intellectual New England, were living this secluded life, the nation was somewhat inconsiderately enlarging its frontiers. Millions of hardy Americans — a vast number from New England it-

self — had crossed the Alleghenies and occupied the prairies; most of the territories had developed into States; the California region had been born; America had acquired new interests, practical and imaginative; New England, even in the region of letters, could no longer arrogate the rôle of spokesman for the United States. The *Atlantic Monthly* had paid the logical penalty for its absorption in New England ideas. The nation, ignored by this northeastern corner of the country, repaid the compliment by ignoring in turn its great literary exponent. The magazine suffered little loss in prestige, for such a reputation, once acquired, is not easily destroyed, but it had experienced the fate that befalls so many classics — of being vastly respected and praised, and not much read. A periodical that prints little fiction and no illustrations, depending almost entirely upon its high literary quality for popularity, necessarily has a small circulation, but the depths to which the *Atlantic* had dropped in 1895 pointed at only one thing, and that was extinction. "I often sit here," Bliss Perry, Page's successor in the editorship, wrote him some years afterward, "in leisure quarters of an hour, and wonder by what extraordinary talent you rescued this magazine from perdition. No one who has not seen something of its inside history can appreciate how great a debt the *Atlantic* owes to you for breathing into it the breath of life. If it had not been for your impatient energy in getting the magazine out of the ruts, the grass would be growing over its grave to-day."

The "breath of life" to which Mr. Perry refers was the breath of the American continent. Page's accomplishment was the transformation of a parochial publication into a national one. The ideas which he had been cherishing for thirty years — the belief in democracy as the inevitable form of political organization, in the broadest

Walter H. Page, as he appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* days

nationalism as distinguished from the sectional outlook, in education as the essential basis of American development, in intellectual leadership as its indispensable requirement, in the preëminence of English literature and English institutions, in the friendly association of the Anglo-Saxon peoples as the most lasting assurance of progress, in the encouragement of all details of life that enlarged the opportunities of the common man — all these conceptions, under the direction of Page, became the warp and woof of this ancient New England institution. Page's correspondence during his four years in Boston, which is voluminous, is really a discussion of the great principles underlying American life and literature as he perceived them.

II

As ever, Page kept constantly surveying the American scene for new writers.

To John Jay Chapman

Boston,
September 26, 1896.

Dear Mr. Chapman:

I heartily welcome your story of revolt against the smooth-flowing, second-hand, "professional," complacent emptiness of contemporaneous "literature." (God save the mark!) Such a cry is refreshing. I speak back a hearty echo.

If I were a "sensational editor," you write. I am! Not a lover of a tinsel, cheap, mechanical sensation: that is of course dull and indecent; but every piece of literature (I mean the real thing) is sensational: moreover, must be sensational. I am growing prematurely old (while I ought

yet to be a mere youth) because of the barren lack of such sensations.

But there is not a day in the calendar when I would not close my weary desk here and go to San Francisco or to Zanzibar — anywhere — to get a first-hand, clear-cut, sensational thing. I say "thing" for I care nothing about what form it take. The pathetic fact is truly and grievously told in your word about Stevenson. He (in a certain sense) failed — looked back, not forward. There the story ends. Who does look forward?

If I can find people with eyes in the front of their heads and with daring enough, who have anything to say, of course the magazine will become such a power as it never was. The conditions all exist — except the men. I have no more doubt that a real man, if one were to rise in American literature, would be hailed with such joy as men feel only when a deliverer comes — of course the mere conventionalities and cowardices and provincial tempers all count for nothing. I care less than nothing about them. I live chiefly on the hope that the day will come before I die when I may silently point to some national, sane utterance and say "That is it!" — beside which the little gliding, mincing things that we now endure for lack of bigger will be utterly forgotten — and instantaneously.

Nobody knows how stupid and merely traditional and dull the magazine is (and all its contemporaries) as well as I know it. I never have had the slightest hesitation in saying so. But the way in which I wish to say this is not the way of a pessimist — not by direct criticism, not by a club (for these methods are cheap and easy and unavailing and they simply tear up the road along which the king may come when he comes), but by making it so different and so much better that men would see what I mean.

All which — platitudes — you owe to your generous

enthusiasm, your kindly response, your cheerful and kindling words . . .

I thank you for the mention that you made of me to your brother. Will you tell him so and tell him, too, that I shall be greatly obliged by matter or suggestions at any time? You say that lots of fellows have been waiting for me. Who are they? Where are they? Every number I mean as an invitation, indeed, a petition, to them to come. If they have the qualities wanted, can't they see that they are in demand here?

The hospitality that was a personal trait was also the foremost attribute in Page's character as editor. Though most of the things he published came as the result of invitation, he painfully scanned every batch of proffered material in the hope of finding a new voice. There are many anecdotes illustrating his patience in this pursuit. An associate was astonished one morning when the door of Page's adjoining office burst open and the editor, waving a manuscript, almost sprang into the room.

"I've got one!" he shouted.

"Got what?"

"A new writer!"

He dragged his co-worker from his chair, took him to a restaurant near by, and read the effusion in such loud tones, and with such manifestations of approval, that the strangers in the room became somewhat doubtful as to his sanity. The piece was an excellent one, indeed, and was published with success. But then ensued the disappointment, common enough in editorial experience. The author, a young girl, began sending manuscript after manuscript, not one of which rekindled the original fire. Plenty of writers produce one story or one poem or one article — and then never repeat the achievement. This was a case

of the kind. Yet the characteristic aspect was the patience, almost tenderness, with which Page kept at work with his discovery. He declined to be persuaded that the girl could not do the thing again; he wrote letter after letter, pointing out her faults, encouraging her to keep everlastingly at the task, expressing his confidence that the fine rapture would return. But this budding genius never flowered. In his grief — for it was little less — Page took all the blame to himself.

"There's something the matter with me," he would say. "That girl can write. She doesn't develop simply because I haven't the genius to show her how."

He had his troubles with another young woman who displayed exceptional talent. The difficulty was that she insisted on using her gift for what Page regarded as unworthy ends. She wrote stories — and stories of considerable power — that probably would not now be looked upon as unsuitable for publication, but which were unprintable in that innocent era. Page, having an instinctive loathing for literature of this kind, spent many hours in a fruitless effort at the girl's reformation. One day, the editor's voice, more energetic even than usual, could be heard in earnest conversation with his caller. The discussion lasted a long time, and finally the rebellious young lady emerged in tears. After her departure Page came out and walked up to the desk of an associate.

"Well," he said, "I have tried everything else and now I have spanked her. It was disagreeable, but it may do her some good."

One of the most difficult things the editor is called upon to do is to decline manuscripts. Page disliked the formal printed slips that are generally used for this ungrateful task. He insisted that declinations should not only be written, but written in the hand of the editor. He spent a

large amount of his time penning rejections of this kind. They were frequently so gracious and so encouraging that — it was said — they were almost as welcome as acceptances.

That delicate New England poet, Louise Imogen Guiney, had sent an essay on dogs when Page had asked for something on a literary topic. The offering was returned with this little note:

To Louise Imogen Guiney

15 October, 1896.

Dear Miss Guiney:

Is it my fault? If it is, I do humbly beg your pardon. Did I fail to tell you that the Men and Letters papers were all to be about literary or bookish subjects? — criticism, suggestion, anything literary?

How are we to get dogs into that category? Of course for such pleasant dogs we have a kennel, the Contributors' Club, to wit; but ought they to be permitted to cut capers, however graceful, in the little house builded for Men and Letters?

I hope that you are having great sport in the wilderness.

His refusal of a "Life of Christ," by the author of "The Gates Ajar," is interesting not only from this point of view, but because it makes clear Page's genuinely reverent attitude toward Christianity.

To Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward

28 September, 1896.

My dear Mrs. Ward:

My temperament is what I think I may call a decisive one. I form opinions, even if they subsequently turn out

to be wrong opinions, with clearness to my own mind, and after I have the facts in hand I generally form them without great delay. But this matter that we now have under consideration has "stumped" me as I think that no other editorial matter could.

But I have felt my way towards a clear opinion at last, and I believe that it is a sound opinion.

I thrust aside all questions but the main one, and this I took up reverently and deliberately. Is Christ a proper subject for magazine articles? I have come to the conclusion that He is not.

Consider what every magazine is and from the nature of its service must be. It is a periodical thing, and to that extent mechanical, and it is a miscellany. It is made for the amusement or for the instruction of people. They take it up to read a novel, an essay, a poem, an argument — a bundle of facts. But the reverential mood is not associated with it. Its atmosphere — as regards its intelligence and good breeding — may be elevating or vulgar, as the case may be; but in every case it is secular. At best it is merely intellectual or merely artistic. It stands for diversion or for instruction, not for spirituality. It may be a theatre, a lecture-room, a platform: it is never a place of devotion.

Now, the very essence of a Life or of a series of Interpretations of Christ is the spiritual insight; the motive is the religious motive; the mood the mood of reverence; and the magazine has not yet become the proper and natural channel for the publication of such literature. Nor can it be made so. No magazine is a thing that can be changed in this respect by you or by me or by anybody. The question is a question of the mood of readers — of their attitude towards periodical publication: it is really a large social question — a matter of social habit, too strong and deep-rooted to overcome. The quality that I am try-

ing to describe is what the word "magazine" conveys to the public.

It might possibly be proper for a Life of Christ or a series of Interpretations to be published in an avowedly religious periodical; but even that I seriously doubt.

I have looked for precedents, and I have found no instructive example of magazine publication of such a thing. While I do not set great store by precedents in a matter of this kind, I have a feeling that the editorial habit of the past has had a sound reason — has been shaped by a sound instinct. I have found cases of the irreverent use of such material, notably the great "debate" in the *North American Review* between Ingersoll and Judge Black on the truth of Christianity; but this was not a reverent study — even on Judge Black's side; it was a sort of platform wrangle.

My present feeling, therefore, is that we ought not to use the matter either as a Life or as a series of Interpretations, nor yet as a single Christmas article. I cannot help thinking that any magazine would make a mistake — a mistake of irreverence — to publish any study of Christ. It might not be a *financial* mistake; and, to tell the truth, I think that it was his good financial instinct that led Mr. McClure to the plan of the serial use of such a thing and a higher editorial instinct that led him and you to regard it as a great enterprise for *book* use.

Now, to go further — somewhat outside my province, indeed — I feel equally certain that, if it be physically possible, you ought to finish this Life for publication as a book. When we consider the subject as a book, we instinctively take a different (and the proper) attitude towards it. A book may be (and many a book is) a thing of reverence — of devotion — carrying a wholly religious atmosphere with it. All the matter between its covers, how-

ever, must be of the same tone and import. It cannot be half devotion and half amusement, nor half devotion and half mere instruction. — The matter, therefore, in its essence, seems to me to belong in a book and in no other form of publication.

These conclusions seem clear to me now, and I think that they rest on a correct analysis of the matter; but the subject is so different from any other subject that I can conceive I may be utterly wrong. If you yourself had a strong conviction as to the best course to pursue — that would give me help, I fancy, either in strengthening the opinion I now have or possibly in changing it. — I pray you tell me if you have come to any clear conclusion. . . .

And, as always, we find Page insisting on the human and personal phases of all subjects.

To Charles Warren Stoddard

Boston, Mass.
August 12, 1896.

My dear Mr. Stoddard:

. . . The article is not yet full enough of "meat": it seems to us rather too much a newspaper sketch. I have a feeling that I may have given you the impression that we wished a mere sketch, whereas the magazine ought to have a well-rounded study of the man [Bret Harte]; and such a study coming from you would naturally take in a great measure the form of reminiscence, which is the most pleasant form of all. I should not say that Mrs. Fields'[1] article on Mrs. Stowe in the August *Atlantic* is a model in any sense, but it illustrates what I mean; for it has a sufficient volume and

[1] Mrs. James T. Fields, the famous hostess of Boston, wife of the former editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

variety of reminiscence to make a very satisfactory portrait of the woman, and incidentally it gives much information about her work — at least many reminders of it.

What did Harte do in California outside his newspaper work? What were his studies and amusements, and who his friends? How old was he when he wrote "The Luck of Roaring Camp"? How did he take his success — modestly? What parallel do you recall to such a sudden rise to distinction? What was the reception of his next work? If Harte hadn't had the virgin field of California and if Kipling hadn't had the virgin field of British India, would they have done such great work? Nobody can answer such a question; I fear, indeed, all these questions are worth little or nothing, but they are the kind that our readers are making, I fancy.

Even in the treatment of scientific subjects the same rule should be observed.

To Simon Newcomb

October 29, 1897

Dear Professor Newcomb:

It has occurred to me time and again during the last year or two (ever since, indeed, I came near to mentioning the subject to you at Johns Hopkins University several years ago when I met you there) — it has occurred to me to ask if you would not write an article or two of a half-reminiscent, half-historical nature explaining, with proper historic proportion, some of the great scientific discoveries that have been made during your life. A formal statement of any such character would be, perhaps, going over ground that has been well ploughed.

My idea, which may be an impracticable one, is to ap-

proach the subject with a distinctly literary aim, and to tell a few of the most interesting scientific stories (to use the editorial lingo) — as pieces of literature. If the story of great discoveries be told with an eye always to their human interest, mingled with personal reminiscences, and with explanations which shall set these events in their proper proportion, I conceive that the result would be novel and interesting and instructive to an unusual degree.

One attractive feature of such papers would be, of course, the reminiscent part of them. Direct, first-hand reminiscences of the big men in science — these contain, indeed, the most charming and most important popular literature of the age in which we live. And this aspect — of the deep human interest in scientific workers — of the work of our time has hardly been treated. We know everything about the poets and romancers and how they worked and what they strove for, and next to nothing about the corresponding personal side of the modern masters of science.

III

Few men felt more keenly the need of making beautiful the American scene, a need felt thirty years ago, and especially now, when so many forces are at work destroying the American landscape.

To Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer

Boston, Mass.
2 March 1896.

My dear Mrs. Van Rensselaer,

When you were here a little while ago, I was struck dumb with the feeling that I had an exceedingly important thing to tell you, but it wouldn't take shape that day. I

have now — not exactly got it into shape, but I can throw out large hints of it.

And I ought, to be entirely honest, to say that I have tried the plan that I am going to unfold on several people here, with no result at all. They stare and look blank and leave me with a feeling that as soon as I am out of hearing they say to one another — "A big straining after nothing."

But — as a story writer told me about his novel the other day — there's as much or as little in this as you can see.

Beautifying the United States — out-door decoration, in a word, on a large scale! The bigness of the thing is appalling. But is it fatal? My notion is that the saving of certain attractive parts of the country from private use or abuse — the Yellowstone Park, the Yosemite Valley, the Niagara Reservation, the Palisades, the military parks — (these) by the United States Government — that the great park-systems of Boston, New York, Chicago, that the incalculable work done by Village Improvement Societies all over the land — these things show the beginning at least of an appreciation of out-door beauty on a large scale. And all these things are recent. Have you any idea of the extent and excellence of the Village Improvement Societies' work? A year or so ago the Reverend old Dryasdust (I can't think of his name, he was once a *Tribune* man, then a preacher, then a lecturer on this improvement idea) wrote a dull and rambling statement of this work for the *Forum*, and I think that several new editions of that number have been printed in consequence.

Following my catalogue of gardening on a large scale — the career of Mr. Olmsted,[1] the very fact that such a career has become possible, and the private attention to land-

[1] Frederick Law Olmsted, the landscape architect of Central Park in New York and many other great public works.

scape gardening, from the buffalo ranch in New Hampshire or Vermont to Biltmore — show that having subdued the continent we now have a mind to adorn it — at least to save its beauty.

Doubtless all this makes little difference to the continent. But the point is, it shows something to our credit and strikes a note of hope.

Or look at it in this fashion: suppose a Martian landscape gardener had made a critical examination of the United States with his opera-glass twenty-five years ago. He would not have seen much to indicate our appreciation of the big piece of earth that we own. If he were to look now he would see at least that the idea of making our part of the world beautiful had occurred to us.

It is rather an interesting way to look at our vast territory — don't you think so? — to take it in at a glance with reference to its physical beauties and possibilities of beauty? It has been running through my mind for a long time that somebody ought to make a series of elaborate and accurate landscape maps of the United States. I am not a cartographer, and I cannot say how the gardens of California and the Salt Lake Valley and the Blue Grass region and the Blue Ridge country of North Carolina and the Hudson Valley and all the rest could be indicated: that's not my business. And perhaps there is no way to indicate these things — all at once — on a map. And here comes the chance for the only art that is not limited by its materials — literature. . . .

Yet — to say it again — it isn't the beauty of the land that seems to me to give the real chance here — it is, rather, the measure of American culture, or the hope of it, that even our small attention to the preservation of this beauty gives hint of. Here is an impulse that ought to be encouraged, a beginning that ought to be cheered.

Go far enough in considering it, and I believe that you will find yourself watering and tending the very roots of a beautiful and enlightened patriotism, too.

Well, is there anything in it or not?

"It has seemed to me that this movement," Page wrote on the same subject to Mrs. Mary C. Robbins, "has a very significant meaning. Putting waste-baskets on the streets, picking up pieces of paper and preserving and planting trees and having an eye to the planting of flowers on a public square — these are simple things, and taken singly they may not have any noteworthy meaning. But when a whole people are shown to be careful about these things, who fifteen years or less ago cared nothing about them — such a fact seems to me full of meaning. What I have in mind is the rapidly awakening appreciation in our people of natural beauty — the appreciation of parks, open squares, trees, landscape gardening. And this all leads even further: I am not sure but it goes very far towards a deep local pride, and this is akin to patriotism."

The phrase that Page especially liked to use as expressing his editorial purpose was that of "reporting and interpreting American civilization." It is worth noting that one of the men he appealed to for aid in picturing Western life was the man who, in recent years, has become so successful as the historian of the frontier — Professor Frederick J. Turner.

To William P. Trent

Boston 189 [1]

Dear Mr. Trent:

I am very much interested in the remark which you made in your letter of several weeks ago that you are try-

[1] Exact date indecipherable, but it is about June, 1896.

ing to trace the part that the South played in the Chicago foolishness [1] back in its ante-bellum roots. I do not believe that you will find any very edifying matter on this aspect of the subject. For my own part I believe that the South has been captured by the spirit of unrest for two reasons. First, of course, it suffers from the agricultural depression which is world-wide, just as the West has suffered; and secondly, and more important, the plain truth is, the isolation of the Southern people and their distance from the centres of activities cause them to brood too much on theories. Their philosophy of life is not sufficiently corrected by contemporaneous influences.

Now this leads me back to an old plan that I have long had in mind about which I should like to trouble you for your opinion. I believe that we can do a most useful piece of work by setting out directly to report civilization in the United States. This is a very vague phrase, but I hardly know how to make it more definite. I will illustrate what I mean by speaking first of the West. A generation ago two or three Eastern newspapers, the *New York Tribune* conspicuously in Horace Greeley's time, very thoroughly and accurately reported the industrial opportunities of the West. Old Greeley's "Go West, young man!" was the summing up of a really remarkable volume of newspaper literature which pointed out a wilderness just ready to be made to blossom. Correspondingly, of course, time and again the industrial side of the South has been "written up."

Making a sort of parallel to this, why is it not possible to report the civilization that has grown up in the Middle West? Of course we care nothing about purely industrial problems, but we care everything about the civilization

[1] The reference, of course, is to the Democratic Convention of 1896, which nominated Bryan.

that is built on the industrial basis laid a generation ago. If I could find a man who would go with sufficiently trained eyes and make a study of Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and tell precisely the kind and grade and colour of the civilization that he finds there — that man would make his reputation which would lead to fortune.

In the same way if I could find a man who would take New England and, with the New England of the fifties, I would say, as a starting-point, picture the changes that have taken place in essential things since then, so as to make a portrait of the New England of to-day, I should of course have a corresponding piece of work. . . .

Now let me ask you what you see in this, whether it appeal to you, and whether it may not be one of the most fruitful pieces of work that a Southern man of this generation could do?

To Frederick J. Turner

29 May, 1896.

Dear Sir,

. . . Recalling your pamphlet on the Disappearance of the Frontier which you sent me a year or two ago and recalling several recent efforts to point out in what respects Western life and its aims are different from the life and aims of the East, I put these two thoughts together and wonder if this would not be true, viz.—

— that since the frontier and of course the frontiersmen have disappeared, the West itself, in the old sense of sharp contrast to the East, has now disappeared.

The frontiersman was a distinct type and frontier life was a life by itself. But a generation after the frontiersman disappeared came towns and town life: society organized itself on the Eastern plan — in fact became New England,

or New England as modified in the Middle West, transplanted to the prairie. Since the distance from Boston to Duluth is no greater now than the distance was from Boston to New Haven once upon a time, of course the East transplanted in the West suffers less change as communication becomes easier. Is it true then, and how far is it true, that the West is only an extension of New England without important variations? Will civilization from the Atlantic to the upper Missouri a hundred years hence be about the same thing that civilization is now in New England? Is the dominant type the type already evolved, or are we working out a new permanent sort of man and kind of life in the West?

There is a never-ending charm in studies of this kind if real characteristics are taken up for study, and not mere passing phases of life. And the subject is as interesting from one point of view — the point of view from which one looks for sectional differences — as from the opposite point of view, from which one looks for similarity. I have a feeling which clings to me after having seen something of life in each of the three great sections of the country — the old East, the old South, and the West — that the differences between the Northeast and the West are transitory. As an incidental inquiry this always comes to mind — to what extent is the South giving any of its characteristics of life to the West?

I shall not weary you more. Let me add only this — whether by any deliberate plan or not, an American magazine that lays hold on the bases of our interesting civilization and makes an honest effort to understand and to interpret the genius of our life — that I mean to be a statement of the purpose of the *Atlantic* — must from this side and from that, directly and indirectly, work towards an interpretation of the larger tendencies that are shaping

us; and every essay to do this, or a part of this task, with grasp and grace, is very welcome.

IV

Page's four years with the *Atlantic* — from 1895 to 1899 — witnessed certain developments that might well have aroused the interest of a man whose chief absorption was that of watching the expanding tendencies of American life. The first, the frenzied nomination of Mr. Bryan by the Democratic Convention held in Chicago, in May, 1896, concerned the American social organism. Like most thoughtful Americans, Page saw that Bryan's nomination represented more than transitory phenomena; the particular issue that swept the convention off its feet, the free coinage of silver at a ratio of sixteen to one, was more or less fortuitous; behind lay influences that had been seeking expression for many years. Bryan's genius in giving a voice to these previously half-spoken tendencies fascinated Page, and made him look upon the Nebraska prophet as something more significant than the mere catchpenny capitalist of social discontent. Indeed, for Bryan himself, little as he sympathized with his economic absurdities, Page had a certain admiration and a certain tolerance. The personal power Bryan had displayed at the Chicago Convention captivated his literary sense. In itself, this incident was not an unwholesome fact; it was a manifestation, at any rate, of skilful leadership and of leadership in the open; and, compared with the coarse and under-cover methods that had placed McKinley in nomination, there was something in it that appealed to any man possessed of political imagination. Perhaps it was the Southerner in Page that led him to deplore the degeneration of American oratory. Back-stair negotiations, and the wire-pulling of party bosses, were the influences that were then sup-

posed to dictate the decisions of political parties; congressional debates and platform persuasions — it was generally believed — had long since passed into the discard. Bryan's demonstration that the most ancient method of directing popular choices was still an active force thus came to Page as a reassuring revelation. "Hardly a day passes in our democratic life," he wrote, "but some marvellous effect of good writing or of good speaking may be observed. It would be hard to find in our whole political annals a better example of quickly and profoundly effective oratory than Mr. Bryan's passionate address to the National Democratic Convention. You may hold the opinion that it was great oratory, or the opinion that it was a mere trick — no matter for my present purpose; it was at least an effective use of language. There sat that great mass of men — a flabby mass of excitable indecision; yet they were American citizens of the same flesh and brain and emotions as the rest of us; and there arose a man who, by sheer force of words, artistically aimed and grouped and shaded, swept them along to an instantaneous decision that they had not anticipated. The decision may have been wise or it may have been foolish. But it is surely foolish to talk about the passing away of all opportunities for effective oratory in the face of such an example as that."

As a leader of the masses, as the sincere, if unintelligent advocate of the common man, Page also felt for Bryan a certain sympathy; he had no misgivings as to his duty, however, for the particular way in which Bryan was attempting to help the discontented Page regarded as full of peril. It was this underlying fact in the Bryan campaign — his persistence in using this resurrected power of oratory for ends that meant national dishonour and social upheaval — which chiefly interested the young editor. The

issue then rocking the nation — the Democratic demand for an inflated currency — was not especially alarming, for its absurdity could not stand the test of events; the real danger was the attempt to organize the agricultural and working classes in a movement aimed against property and against the institutions, especially the Supreme Court, erected by the Fathers to protect them. "Surely," Page wrote Thomas M. Cooley, the great authority on constitutional law, "there is no doubt of the need of the wisest words of our wisest men, nor of the effect that they will have. The public is in a mood to listen to a philosophical explanation of the massing of the deluded and the discontented, and seriously to consider the dangers that lie in the way marked out by their programme — a better mood for serious reflection than ever before in the lifetime of this generation. The discouraging fact is that the leaders of this pseudo-democratic movement themselves have not the slightest notion of what would be the practical consequences of their success; they play as jauntily with the instruments of national bankruptcy and dishonour as if they were handling only the old party playthings at a political picnic; and certainly the masses of the people who accept this programme do not know that they are carrying firebrands."

To George F. Edmunds[1]

Boston, Mass.
23 July, 1896.

Dear Mr. Edmunds,

. . . Such a revelation of dangerous ignorance as this platform makes is quite another matter. As to its causes

[1] George Franklin Edmunds (1828–1919), one of the most distinguished of United States Senators and an authority on constitutional law.

— one way of looking at it is very hopeful: all the regiments of the malcontents have gone into one camp, and they may the more easily be routed at one attack. But the sad thing about it is the alarming display of ignorance of law, of the necessity of public order, of the sacredness of the judiciary and of the very underlying principles of Government as well as of the simplest lessons of financial experience. Does this ignorance warrant loss of any of our confidence in democratic institutions or in party government? Some most extraordinary and unexplained causes must have been at work to produce such a result.

And I think that nobody believes that these men know what the logical consequences of their programme would be. I doubt if ever a situation was before presented in our history for as helpful a use of constitutional learning in directly affecting public opinion. In ordinary moods an explanation of what socialism or anarchy is attracts little attention: now this platform is the text and the whole people are an attentive audience.

To J. Laurence Laughlin[1]

Boston, Mass.
August 11, 1896.

Dear Professor Laughlin:

. . . Suppose Bryan is elected. What would happen? The stock market, of course, is already beginning to give an indication. Within a day after the vote were announced we should be on a silver basis. You could not find a piece of gold nor a gold certificate from one end of the country to another. The paralysis of industry would be something frightful, but the free coinage plan is so absurd that it could not even be tried. During the four months between

[1] The noted economist, at that time Professor in the University of Chicago.

Mr. Bryan's election and his inauguration the panic would produce such disastrous effects that the whole country would suffer a violent revulsion of opinion, and demands too strong to resist would be made upon the incoming President and Congress to take action to restore confidence. In other words, would it not follow that before Mr. Bryan could follow out the Chicago programme at all, such a state of things would come about as to make it impossible for him even to try to carry it out? So little do they know the delicate but prodigious forces they are dealing with.

Or is this to any extent a fantastic view of the situation?

V

The other great event was one that concerned America's relations with the outside world, for Page's *Atlantic* period was also the period when the United States, by declaring war on Spain, started the American participation in European affairs that had its logical outcome, twenty years after, on the battlefields of France. That Page should at once have thrown the influence of this staid New England magazine on the side of the Administration signalized, more than any other editorial happening, the *Atlantic's* break with its past. The New England forces that had previously ruled in Park Street almost unanimously shared John Morley's opinion that modern times presented only one justifiable war[1] — the war between the North and South in America. Nearly all the New England Abolitionists, following the lead of Garrison, were haters of war. No single public character was so obnoxious to them as the Jingo. New England had for years taken leadership in the peace movement; its idealists believed that war could be destroyed as a human institution and were exerting all their efforts to usher in the new golden age. The cloud

[1] Lord Morley's "Recollections," Vol. I, p. 20.

menacing the United States from the direction of Cuba had not dissuaded them. That they sympathized with the sufferings of the Cubans and regarded the presence of Spain in that island as a sanguine anachronism is true; but they believed that the problem could be settled by peaceful means and that it did not justify military intervention. The American declaration of war against the Spanish monarchy therefore came to them almost as a personal insult. When the philosophers of Boston and Cambridge glanced at their favourite organ in June, 1898, however, they had a surprise from which they have hardly yet recovered. On the cover of the *Atlantic* appeared the unfurled American flag, waving defiantly. Those whose memory ran back to 1861 recalled that, after the firing on Fort Sumter, the flag had similarly appeared on the *Atlantic*. This blatant show of the war spirit could mean only one thing: the editor evidently believed that the war of '98, like that of '61, was a justifiable one, and worthy of the endorsement of all decent-feeling Americans. The first ten pages, containing a long editorial, substantiated this impression.

Yesterday [wrote Page] we were going about the prosaic tasks of peace, content with our own problems of administration and finance, a nation to ourselves — "commercials" as our enemies call us in derision. To-day we are face to face with the sort of problems that have grown up in the management of world empires, and the policies of other nations are of intimate concern to us. Shall we be content with peaceful industry, or does there yet lurk in us the adventurous spirit of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers? And have we come to a time when, no great enterprises awaiting us at home, we shall be tempted to seek them abroad?

The race from which we are sprung is a race that for a

thousand years has done the adventurous and outdoor tasks of the world. The English have been explorers, conquerors of continents, founders of states. We ourselves, every generation since we came to America, have had great practical enterprises to engage us — the fighting with Indians, the clearing of forests, the war for independence, the construction of a government, the extension of our territory, the pushing backward of the frontier, the development of an El Dorado (which the Spaniards owned, but never found), the long internal conflict about slavery, a great civil war, the building of railroads, and the compact unification of a continental domain. These have been as great enterprises and as exciting, coming in rapid succession, as any race of men has ever had to engage it — as great enterprises for the play of the love of adventure in the blood as our kinsmen over the sea have had in the management of their world empire. The old outdoor spirit of the Anglo-Saxon has till lately found wider scope in our own history than we are apt to remember.

But now a generation has come to manhood that has had no part in any great adventure. In politics we have had difficult and important tasks, indeed, but they have not been exciting — the reform of the civil service and of the system of currency, and the improvement of municipal government. These are chiefly administrative. In a sense they are not new or positive tasks, but the correction of past errors. In some communities politics has fallen into the hands of petty brigands, and in others into those of second-rate men, partly because it has offered little constructive work to do. Its duties have been routine, regulative duties; its prizes, only a commonplace distinction to honest men and the vulgar spoil of office to dishonest ones. The decline in the character of our public life has been the natural result of the lack of large constructive

opportunities. The best-equipped men of this generation have abstained from it, and sought careers by criticism of the public servants who owe their power to the practical inactivity of the very men who criticize them. In literature as well we have well-nigh lost the art of constructive writing, for we work too much on indoor problems and content ourselves with adventures in criticism. It is noteworthy that the three books which have found most readers, and had perhaps the widest influence on the masses of this generation, are books of Utopian social programmes (mingled with very different proportions of truth), by whose fantastic philosophy, thanks to the dullness of the times, men have tried seriously to shape our national conduct — "Progress and Poverty," "Looking Backward," and "Coin's Financial School."[1] Apostolic fervour, romantic dreaming, and blatant misinformation have each captivated the idle minded masses, because their imaginations were not duly exercised in their routine toil. It has been a time of social reforms, of the "emancipation" of women, of national organizations of children, of societies for the prevention of minor vices and for the encouragement of minor virtues, of the study of genealogy, of the rise of morbid fiction, of journals for "ladies," of literature for babes, of melodrama on the stage because we have had melodrama in life also — of criticism and reform rather than of thought and action. These things all denote a lack of adventurous opportunities, an indoor life such as we have never before had a chance to enjoy; and there are many indications that a life of quiet may have become irksome, and may not yet be natural to us. Greater facts than these denote a period also of peace and such well being as men of our race never before enjoyed — sanitary im-

[1] The last, by William Hope Harvey (also known as "Coin" Harvey), is now almost forgotten, but it was the chief literary product of the silver craze, and, indeed, largely responsible for it.

provements, the multiplication and the development of universities, the establishment of hospitals, and the application of benevolence to the whole circle of human life — such a growth of soul as we had come to think had surely made war impossible.

Is this dream true? Or is it true that, a thousand years of adventure behind us, we are unable to endure a life of occupations that do not feed the imagination? After all, it is temperament that tells, and not schemes of national policy, whether laid down in farewell addresses or in Utopian books. No national character was ever shaped by formula or by philosophy; for greater forces than these lie behind it — the forces of inheritance and of events. Are we, by virtue of our surroundings and institutions, become a different people from our ancestors, or are we yet the same race of Anglo-Saxons whose restless energy in colonization, in conquest, in trade, in "the spread of civilization," has carried their speech into every part of the world, and planted their habits everywhere?

Within a week, such a question, which we had hitherto hardly thought seriously to ask during our whole national existence, has been put before us by the first foreign war that we have had since we became firmly established as a nation. Before we knew the meaning of foreign possessions in a world ever growing more jealous, we have found ourselves the captors of islands in both great oceans; and from our home-staying policy of yesterday we are brought face to face with world-wide forces in Asia as well as in Europe which seem to be working, by the opening of the Orient, for one of the greatest changes in human history. Until a little while ago our latest war dispatches came from Appomattox. Now our latest dispatches (when this is written) come from Manila. The news from Appomattox concerned us only. The news from Manila sets every statesman and sol-

dier in the world to thinking new thoughts about us and to asking new questions. And to nobody has the change come more unexpectedly than to ourselves. Has it come without our knowing the meaning of it? The very swiftness of these events and the ease with which they have come to pass are matter for more serious thought than the unjust rule of Spain in Cuba, or than any tasks that have engaged us since we rose to commanding physical power.

The removal of the scandal of Spain's control of its last American colony is as just and merciful as it is pathetic — a necessary act of surgery for the health of civilization. Of the two disgraceful scandals of modern misgovernment, the one which lay within our correction will no longer deface the world. But when we have removed it, let us make sure that we stop; for the Old World's troubles are not our troubles, nor its tasks our tasks, and we should not become sharers in its jealousies and entanglements. The continued progress of the race in the equalization of opportunity and in well-being depends on democratic institutions, of which we, under God, are yet, in spite of all our shortcomings, the chief beneficiaries and custodians. Our greatest victory will not be over Spain but over ourselves — to show once more that even in its righteous wrath the Republic has the virtue of self-restraint. At every great emergency in our history we have had men equal to the duties that faced us. The men of the Revolution were the giants of their generation. Our civil war brought forward the most striking personality of the century. As during a period of peace we did not forget our courage and efficiency in war, so, we believe, during a period of routine domestic politics, we have not lost our capacity for the largest statesmanship. The great merit of democracy is that, out of its multitudes who have all had a chance for natural development, there arise, when

occasion demands, stronger and wiser men than any class-governed societies have ever bred.

An outcome of the Spanish War that gave great satisfaction to Page, evident from this extract, was the closer understanding it brought between the United States and Great Britain. The inevitability of British-American friendship had been one of his convictions from early youth. His love of English literature and his love of the British race, first absorbed in his Randolph-Macon days from Thomas Randolph Price, naturally increased when the British press and the British people almost instantaneously championed the American side in the Spanish War, and the British government itself adopted a policy of friendly neutrality. That continental Europe, especially Germany and France, at once placed themselves on the side of Spain, naturally strengthened this emotion. The tremendous fruits that this new relationship were to bear in the European war of 1914–1918 were not then apparent, even to the most far-seeing; yet it is true that Great Britain's adoption of the American cause in 1898, and Germany's hostility to the United States during the same crisis, were one of those international developments that may fairly be called "epochal." That Page, within his own sphere, should have exerted all his influence on the side of American-British amity seems something almost preordained. The new adjustment really began with the Venezuelan disturbance. Walter Page in the United States, and Mr. Arthur J. Balfour in Great Britain — destined to become warm friends and co-workers in the same cause two decades afterward — were among those who seized the Venezuelan crisis of 1896 and the Spanish-American crisis of 1898, as events upon which to base strong affiliations between the two great English-speaking peoples.

Appropriately enough, one of Page's correspondents during the Venezuelan episode was Mr. Edward J. Phelps, who had been Minister to Great Britain from 1885 to 1889.

To Edward J. Phelps

13 February, 1896.

Dear Sir:

. . . The best service that we can render comes now by reason of the opportunity to take a more comprehensive view — a view not only of this incident but of the larger and more important subject that it has naturally led to. We take the liberty to suggest that the use of the controversy about the Venezuelan boundary as an illustration in a discussion of this larger subject, is, after all, its best use.

The truth is — and while you may allow something for my enthusiasm, I pray you do not allow too much — the truth is, all the hubbub and confusion that we have had is hardly too high a price to pay for a chance to say to the English people in a frank and courageous tone, in what ways we are indifferent to their opinions and independent of them, and in what larger ways we are their real cousins and blood-kin, with the great heritage of the race common to us both. Such a word will find a response on either side of the Atlantic . . .

And when this phase of the Spanish-American War came uppermost, what more suitable confidant could Page have found than the great English interpreter of the United States to Great Britain, the man who was afterward to serve the cause so effectively as British Ambassador to the United States?

To James Bryce

23 April, 1898.

Dear Sir:

. . . The most significant thing that has been made plain to us on this side of the ocean by recent events is the instinctive feeling in England and in the Colonies, especially in Canada (if the information that comes to us is correct), that, whether our war with Spain were prudently or even justifiably begun, English sympathy and English interests are with the Americans. And this community of feeling and interest has its root deep down in race and institutions. Here, of course, we come to the gist of the whole matter. While almost all the thoughtful and conservative classes in the United States were opposed to armed intervention and yet think that war might have been avoided by diplomacy, there is a strong conviction that the clash has been caused by a real and deep national feeling of disgust and impatience with Spain in Cuba. After the destruction of the *Maine* in the harbour of Havana, I doubt whether any Congress or any President could have prevented war, unless Spain consented to withdraw her troops from Cuba. The unbusinesslike, inhumane, and ineffective management of the island is a barbarous anachronism. The people of the United States strongly felt this, and this feeling gave our Jingoes their opportunity. If we had had no Jingoes, doubtless we should with time and patience have brought peace in Cuba without war; but the unanimous support of the Administration since war was begun gives strength to the opinion that our Jingoes could not have brought us to war but for the strong popular feeling against Spanish methods and institutions.

And there is, I am sure, a feeling of suppressed satisfaction that an instinctive institutional enmity to Great

Britain and the United States has found expression in Continental Europe — satisfaction not because there is enmity but because the instinctive expression of enmity emphasizes the necessity for Anglo-Saxon methods and the Anglo-Saxon type of institutions.

The fact is made plainer than it ever was before that English-speaking men are friends and friends for the largest purposes of civilization. I believe that we shall not hear anything more in the United States about hostility to England. English sympathy with the United States now will cause even our Jingoes to forget the sympathy of a part of the English people with the Southern Confederacy.

To James Bryce

9 May, 1898.

My dear Sir, —

. . . The expression of English sympathy for us in this war has done more to eradicate the foolish jealousy or hatred of England in the American mind than all other events of the last thirty years. I hear men say almost every day that the war is justified by this result, if there were no other result. For myself, much as any war is to be regretted, I confess that I cannot be wholly sorry that the inevitable contest with Spain has come, because of the important incidental results; and the most important incidental result is the radical (and I think permanent) change of feeling toward England. Nobody here has yet proposed any definite plan whereby England and the United States may become more closely allied (except the Arbitration Treaty and that failed in the Senate), but the public mind will now approve any plan that commends itself to Anglo-Saxon common sense.

Since I wrote to you the capture of Manila has brought

a problem new to Americans — new certainly to this generation; and we see already the beginnings of an "Imperial" party here. Indeed, I do not see, nor do I know anybody who sees, how we are going to get rid of these islands, even if it were certain that we shall wish to get rid of them. The possession of the Philippines and of the Hawaiian Islands will bring an overwhelming reason for as close an alliance as possible with Great Britain.

How much of the present exaltation and rapidly growing "Imperial" ambition is a mere passing joy of victory, it is hard to say; but there can be little doubt but a wider-looking policy has come into our political life, to remain.

To James Bryce

27 May, 1898.

My dear Sir:

I think I wrote you that no editorial opportunity has ever presented itself that I welcomed more eagerly or valued more highly than the opportunity now presented to do all that a magazine can do to set public opinion in the Republic toward a more cordial attitude to Great Britain. The memories of the Civil War will by this war with Spain be pushed far back in our consciousness and the recollection of the sympathy expressed by some Englishmen will now be forgotten; and there is, I hope, small chance that the American Irishman will ever be able again to lead any part of American opinion astray. This war has called to the American mind in a way that I think would surprise you a realization of our kinship with Englishmen; and the good that will come from it (whatever the evil be that also comes) will be incalculable; and notwithstanding the opinion of some of our New York friends to the contrary, the war is approved by the mass of the people, and by the majority of the thoughtful class as well.

The imagination of the American people has been quickened as never before in my lifetime, and if opinion can be guided toward the larger and lasting tasks, I am inclined to think that the war will incidentally bring very rich results. . . .

Not only had Page vigorously supported the McKinley Administration in the war, but he did not shrink from accepting its consequences. These consequences appalled even many of the Americans who had regarded Spanish cruelty as a sufficient ground for American intervention. A few days after the declaration, Admiral Dewey had sailed into Manila Harbor, destroyed the Spanish fleet and, by that comparatively simple act, added a great empire in Asiatic waters to the American domain. What was the United States to do with this unexpected and unwelcome gift? No more puzzling question has ever been presented a young nation. The one thing that seemed impossible was to hand the islands back to Spain. No crime ever committed by Spain herself could have been comparable to such an evil act. Such a transference would have meant merely the resumption of the oppression and cruelty which had caused the Filipinos to revolt as similar conditions had forced the Cubans. Even though the natives, left to themselves, should expel the Spaniards, as they might possibly have done, their own inexperience would have led to a bloody chaos even worse than Spanish rule. What was the alternative? Annexation seemed the only logical and humane outcome. But the "annexation" of subject peoples by a liberty-preaching democracy had an unpleasant sound. The particular section in which Page lived raised its voice in the most violent protest. Seldom has the New England conscience been so excited. New words, as Page says in his letter to Mr. Bryce, were now heard throughout

the land. These were "imperialist" and "anti-imperialist." Boston became the capital of the latter group. The venerable Massachusetts Senator, George Frisbie Hoar — who, in character, intellectual gifts and influence, was unquestionably the outstanding figure in the Upper Chamber, a worthy successor of Webster and Sumner — led the "anti-imperialist" group at Washington. An "Anti-Imperialist League," founded in Boston, filled the nation with anti-annexationist preaching — what would now be called "propaganda." These forces opposed the retention of the Philippines, though they offered no alternative programme. Strangely enough, their spokesman in the Presidential campaign of 1900 became William Jennings Bryan, who, in that year, made another assault on the Presidency with "anti-imperialism" as his noisiest battle cry.

But Page again supported the McKinley Administration. His practical sense perceived that annexation, at least temporary annexation, was the only possible result of the complicated circumstances. His attitude did not please the Bostonian atmosphere. With one of the leaders of the anti-imperialist group, Professor Charles Eliot Norton, Page had established delightful relations. Yet his course as editor of the *Atlantic* grieved this fine idealist — the friend and literary executor of John Ruskin and of James Russell Lowell and the correspondent of Carlyle. Page was fond of relating how he once spent a whole afternoon in Professor Norton's library, discussing the Spanish War and its results. "To him," said Page, "it seemed wicked, and he argued its wickedness with such charm that the result he produced was not conviction but something far finer than conviction — the influence of a spirit that had so high and far-reaching an outlook on the world that a passing incident like the war with Spain was of too little importance to

dispute about. Men who inspire are too rare to quarrel with or to quarrel about."

"Congress," Page wrote James Bryce, July 8, 1898, "has passed and the President has approved the resolution to annex the Hawaiian Islands. How we are going to govern them and the Philippines is the most perplexing question that we have had to face for thirty years." The mere fact that the problem was perplexing, however, was no good reason why the Government should evade it. And Page always looked upon the solution finally adopted as one of the most successful compromises of statesmanship — successful not only in theory but in its practical working. He especially liked this policy because it was a Jeffersonian policy — the extension to remote areas of Jefferson's principle of uplifting the common man. Let the United States annex the islands, not necessarily for all time, but for a period during which the Filipinos should themselves be trained in the essentials of self-government. First build public schools all over the islands, much as Jefferson, a century before, had wished to build schools in every "ward" of Virginia. Teach the natives not only to read and write, but train them in agriculture, in the trades, in the mechanic arts; introduce sanitation, drive out smallpox, the bubonic plague, beri-beri, all the diseases which destroy the physical frame and which science has shown the way to conquer; build highways and railroads — for civilization is largely a matter of communication — and other great public works — scientific penal and reformatory institutions, hospitals, and the like. By gradual steps extend to the people the control of their own government in the hope that the time may come when the Philippines, completely separated from the United States, can become a self-governing nation. It was a noble conception and Page was one of its most earnest supporters.

He watched the workings of the experiment through the succeeding years, and hailed it as one of the greatest achievements of American statecraft. Neither his lifetime nor the lifetime of the present generation has seen the moment when the American people can completely sever the bonds that unite them with their Pacific dependents; but the world has borne adequate testimony to the vast American accomplishment of founding the lives of the Filipinos on a new basis. An exchange of letters between Page and his close Boston friend, William Roscoe Thayer [1] — a man who for a time at least maintained the "anti-imperialist" viewpoint — may fitly close this episode. The first was written from St. Louis, where Page had gone to witness the World's Fair in 1904.

To William Roscoe Thayer

St. Louis, Mo.
May 20, 1904.

My dear Thayer:

. . . This is really a big show — or it will be when it is ready. I am at work very hard, but I am enjoying it very much. The American citizen is here — a hearty, vigorous, sane sort of fellow — with his healthful wife and normal healthy children; and I am incurably fond of them. They strike me as wholesome to the very core. I am staying at an old barn of a hotel where they live all huddled together — decently, cheerfully, ever curious — perfectly "straight" and normal. We are a great people we, of this vast valley. We don't know our "will" or "shall" always; but I'll be hanged if we don't know some other things mighty well. We know good land, good horses, good machinery, good

[1] William Roscoe Thayer (1859–1923), biographer of Cavour and John Hay and author of "The Dawn of Italian Independence."

grain and hogs and fruit and cotton; and we are beginning to look at Italian statuary without blushing. Most of all, we are honest and we have good brains and tireless perseverance; and we can learn anything. We wear good clothes too, and demand rooms with baths. We love to hold "Congresses" and to make speeches — both sexes of us — but by this we learn a wide toleration of opinions different from ours. And we are cheerful and good-natured to the extreme. A woman who received visitors at the Oklahoma building (Oklahoma, mind you!) shook hands with so many of us who have good grips that her hand is to-day done up in iodine with a bandage. Isn't that vigorous hospitality?

From William Roscoe Thayer

Cambridge, Mass.
May 31, 1904.

Dear Page:

. . . Your account of the St. Louis Fair and of our Western brethren interests me greatly. If I were stronger and had the money to spare, I would see them for myself: but I never visited but one exposition — that in Paris in '89 — and then, after an hour or two I began to feel as though I were a floorwalker in a Wanamaker caravansary. I hope that, when I revisit the glimpses of the moon, the Lord will give me a physique to match my intellectual eagerness, which has always been weighed down by this carcass.

Meanwhile I rejoice that some men are made like you, and I hope you may long keep it up. What you say about the vigorous healthy West I believe is true. And yet I wish that with it there were a keener moral sense. The Spanish War and the Philippine Affair seem to me to show that our people — however excellent their intentions may be — can

be stampeded into any policy, bad as well as good, like so many cattle. In that crisis they neither respected national tradition and the principles on which the Republic is founded, nor did they consider whether their action could be justified by the universal standard of right and wrong. This tendency to mobbishness, in which emotion is substituted for reason, and emotion quickly flares up as hysteria, is the most sobering phase that our national character has ever shown. For what will it profit us to have good intentions, to be vigorous and hopeful, if we run amuck, just like Paris communards or Chinese Boxers? . . .

Yours cordially,

WILLIAM R. THAYER.

To William Roscoe Thayer

9 June, 1904.

MY DEAR THAYER:

On the contrary, the impulse that moved the people when we went into the war with Spain was the best possible evidence of the sound moral instinct of our democracy. It was the sanest, humanest, most generous act of our time. Consider Cuba then and consider Cuba now! Every colony of every nation has gained by it. We set the management of colonies on a higher level forever; and we lifted ourselves in the moral esteem of all mankind incalculably.

So, too, as regards the Philippines. Go to St. Louis and see the people of these Asiatic tribes as they are, and see the record there presented of our work. We have forever discredited the old methods of extending the bounds of civilization and substituted a new one — a humaner one, a more effective one.

The most immoral people of our generation are those

who stay at home and believe and repeat the falsehoods of the displeased little despots and "grafters" who throve under the old order of things. In the history of civilization when it comes to be written right, Taft [1] will stand as an heroic figure.

The Philippine exhibit at St. Louis — the peoples, their industries, their habits, their thought — all are there to be seen and read easily — is the most constructive thing of recent years.

If eastern Massachusetts could be carried bodily to that Fair, it would be a most interesting exhibit.

Heaven bless you — you provoked this. But we are *not* going to the devil: we are exterminating him.

No, I can't go to Harvard this June. I was graduated last year and will be graduated again next June. This is my off year. You don't think I had a boy for *every* year — did you?

But I am having some academic fun of my own this year. I seem all on a sudden to have attained the Phi Beta Kappa level — the Lord only knows why or how. But I made the Phi Beta Kappa oration two days ago at Columbia, and I go in forty-eight hours to do the same thing at Chicago. I find it good exercise, and I get a new point of view on some subjects. Now and then, too, in my thrifty way, I find a new man who can write for my magazines, by such journeys. And (to be frank) I like to preach my little gospel of cheerfulness; for it is true. Of that I am certain, whatever else be in doubt.

And I am certain, too, of the pleasure that a letter from you always gives. A pleasant summer to you and Mrs. Thayer.

[1] Page had in mind, of course, Mr. Taft's success as Governor-General of the Philippines.

VI

The four years that Page spent in Boston were among the most enjoyable of his life. Southerner that he was, he immediately perceived a warm kinship in the New England folk, and his associates and neighbours also found Page something new and illuminating. The liberality of this old headquarters of abolitionism, in bestowing one of its greatest honours on a literary "carpet-bagger" from the South and leaving him complete freedom in working out his salvation, was a personal tribute that Page rated at its true worth. All his companions at Houghton Mifflin Company's office proved helpful and congenial. Especially with Mr. Horace E. Scudder — the embodiment of New England in its most scholarly and charming aspects — did Page form an admiring friendship. It was at the personal solicitation of Mr. Scudder, then the editor of the *Atlantic*, that Page had come to Boston. Mr. Scudder was not in robust health, and although, for the first two years of Page's connection, he retained the titular headship of the magazine, he left its editorial control entirely in Page's hands. "I look with admiration on what you are doing," he wrote Page, "and take a back seat with reasonable equanimity." This in spite of the fact that Mr. Scudder's editorial approach was different from that of his energetic co-worker. "Literature is never more true than when it is serene," Mr. Scudder wrote Page, gently protesting against the large number of controversial articles in a single issue; however, Page's bluff heartiness, the new atmosphere of vitality, and the feeling for the present interest that he brought into the quiet and somewhat dingy environs of Park Street, won Mr. Scudder's sympathy. While Boston drawing rooms and clubs were declaiming against the far flying American flag on the *Atlantic's* cover and against the *Atlantic's* endorsement of the Spanish War and Philip-

pine annexation, Mr. Scudder, writing from Europe, expressed his approval and tried to persuade Page to adopt an even more extreme policy. When Mr. Scudder laid down an editorship that had been only nominal for two years, his greatest satisfaction was that Page was to be his successor.

The whole Boston and Cambridge region, with its historic and intellectual traditions, fascinated Page. His usual method of transit from his Park Street office to his Cambridge home was a walk of several miles along the river and woods; one of his favourite companions was Professor Shaler, Harvard's great student of geology and nature — and man. Another was Macgregor Jenkins, at that time a young colleague in the *Atlantic* office. Mr. Jenkins supplies a personal view of Page at this time. "The effect of his presence in Park Street was immediately felt. I found myself associated with an editor who recognized the existence of the business department, and who became at once a source of tremendous inspiration to us all. His kindness and consideration to a much younger man won my confidence, and I have always said that my brief contact with Walter Page taught me more about publishing than I had ever learned before or have acquired since. He made it a point to work closely with his associates, and, while he could have placed no value at all upon my services or my judgment, he always consulted with me and took me into his editorial confidence to an unusual degree. In those days he presented a curious combination of Southern carelessness with a suggestion of rugged power. He seemed to have two entirely different methods of expression. On formal occasions he knew better than anyone else how to use the English language, but, in the give-and-take of daily life and office routine, he employed a rough-and-ready vernacular which sometimes had a disturbing effect

in the tranquil precinct of Park Street. The outstanding impression he made on me was that of intense intellectual restlessness. In those days he impressed me — and I think the impression correct in view of later developments, — as a man who had not found himself — a man who was hearing some call at the time that he did not quite know how to answer. Despite his humour, which at times was almost boisterous, and in spite of long hours of incredible labour, Page would have for days on end periods of abstraction, and one of my most familiar recollections of him is his figure, as he stood with his hands deep in his trousers pockets and a cigar in the corner of his mouth, looking out of the windows of our old Park Street offices across Boston Common in utter forgetfulness of everything around him. Those were the days and hours when I knew that it was best to keep away from him. Such days would frequently end with his suggestion that I walk home with him — he was at that time living in Cambridge. His mood would alternate between the lively and varied conversation of which he was a master, and every appearance of the most profound depression." [1]

The Boston Common greatly charmed this Southern editor. When he wished to concentrate on a manuscript, it was Page's custom to leave his office, sit under the trees on a park bench, and pore over the proffered contribution. "I have to thank you for a very memorable day," he wrote his old friend, Joel Chandler Harris, in August, 1896. "Early one Sunday morning I took 'Sister Jane' out into Boston Common, and there she proceeded to unfold herself. Except Uncle Remus himself, no Southern characters have walked from life into a book quite so naturally or unblurred, it seems to me, as William Wornum, Sister Jane, and the two old fellows from the country. In answer

[1] Personal communication to the author.

to your question which you asked me some time ago, namely, 'What is the matter with the book?' let me say that it needs to be put in type and printed. That is my prescription for it."

On another volume Page's prognostication was not so happy. As literary adviser to Houghton, Mifflin and Company — an office he combined with the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly* — Edward Wescott's "David Harum" came to his desk for decision. Page gave it for a first reading to his trusted assistant, Miss Francis, who, for the larger part of her life had been an inseparable part of the *Atlantic* organization, and whose background was exclusively New England. "It's vulgar and smells of the stable," was Miss Francis' comment, as she returned the manuscript most disapprovingly to Page. Perhaps, in the press of other work, he read it hastily, or perhaps its incongruities of style blinded him to the book's genuine qualities — but the fact is that Page, in company with about a dozen other leaders of the publishing profession, rejected this manuscript. This mistake made him the object of much good-natured raillery for the rest of his stay in Boston.

"Refused any more David Harums this week?" Mr. Mifflin would say, poking his head through the doorway, whereat both Page's hands would go up in a mock plea for mercy.

Of another of his Boston friends, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, whom he called "the most distinguished of American women," Page has left pleasing memoranda.

The greatest personal pleasure of an editorial career comes in the association that one has with some of the most interesting persons in the world. . . . The first time I went to see Mrs. Julia Ward Howe she came into the room and looked at me a moment and said:

"Why, you are a younger man than I thought you were."

"Yes, Mrs. Howe," I had the good luck to say to this most youthful of octogenarians, "young enough to have fallen in love with you."

"Do you know," she said instantly, "that sounds pleasant even when one is eighty."

Then she was off in a jiffy telling me my duty to help the cause of woman suffrage: and I was trying to induce her to write her reminiscences. We both succeeded at last. . . .

The author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" retains in this beautiful old age her brilliant intellectual powers. In her pleasant Beacon Street home in Boston, where she has welcomed so many famous persons, she received her friends on Thursday afternoons throughout last winter. She speaks French, Italian or Greek, if necessary, to the distinguished foreigners who visit her, and her quick wit and humour never desert her. She keeps in good use her extraordinary gift of repartee, as when, for instance, she recently received a card on which was written:

"Greetings to Boston's greatest trinity, Howe, Higginson, and Hale."

With a twinkle in her eye (she does not use glasses), she exclaimed:

"They can't say that we drop our H's in Boston."

The marvellous popularity of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," which has been called the "Marseillaise of the unemotional Yankee," somewhat overshadows her other writings and there is a constant demand for her to recite it; and she is good-natured enough often to do so. Her impressive recitation of the poem remains a delightful memory to all who have heard it.

If you were to ask Mrs. Howe which of all her social and

philanthropic interests she cherishes most, she would probably say her interest in individuals. This trait accounts for her close friendship with many famous people. It may be amusing to recall a little episode which took place when Edwin Booth was first making a name for himself. Mrs. Howe, who was one of the early admirers of his genius, was anxious to have her friend, Charles Sumner, make his acquaintance, and she invited him to meet Booth at her house, assuring him that he "would find the actor a most interesting person."

"The truth is, I have got beyond taking an interest in individuals," the Senator responded.

Mrs. Howe did not then make any reply, but she wrote in her diary: "Charles Sumner has got beyond taking an interest in individuals. God almighty has not got so far." When Mr. Sumner next came to visit her, she playfully showed him what she had written, and he begged her to strike it out.

And this note about John Hay, whom Page greatly admired, belongs to the same era:

I called one day at the Department of State in Washington while Mr. John Hay was Secretary and again tried to make him say when he would write his Recollections. He pointed to the papers on his desk — there was on his desk that very day his historic letter to the Powers about the preservation of China's integrity. He pointed to these papers and said — "After this job is done perhaps I'll get time to rest." He paused a moment and said — "I may rest before it is done" — as he did.

To Horace E. Scudder

Biscoe,[1] North Carolina,
May 5, 1899.

My dear Mr. Scudder:

. . . This is the first time, it has so happened, that I have been in the South in May in a great many years; and I had almost forgotten how beautiful the spring is here. You can see at intervals of two days that the leaves on the oaks and the hickories have grown; the atmosphere is a tonic; the weather perfect — a little warm in the middle of the day, but not yet hot. The odour of the forest is as refreshing as wine.

I am at my brother's in this little village-in-the-woods, and it is the best place to do nothing that I know. Some of my other kinspeople, thirty miles away, are connected with us by telephone, and we exchange greetings and gossip in the morning; and in the afternoon they come to see me on the amusing little petroleum locomotive that they have for pleasure trips. They have fresh vegetables, good horses (and bad roads), bicycles, locomotives, children and dogs and flowers — everything to play with and nothing to suggest work. I have never been able clearly to make out why I ever went to New York or Boston, and the mystery seems deeper these four days than it was before. I am debating whether to go back or to send for my family and rest here till we die. While the debate goes on my ramshackle body gets stronger and is every day regaining confidence in itself. They all report a visible improvement in my looks and gait since I came.

You have no idea how hard it is to think of work here. The talk and the surroundings suggest everything but

[1] This letter was written while Page was convalescing from an illness, at the North Carolina home of his brother, Robert N. Page.

work. But in a week, I shall pull myself together and by one prodigious effort get on the train and in twenty-four hours be in Boston — another man. Meantime, Heaven bless you all!

Sincerely yours,

W. H. P.

An old coloured friend of mine came to inquire about my health yesterday and he was very cheerful in his assurance of my rapid recovery, "cause you done come here to Miss Flora's [1] whar you git plenty o' good things to eat."

To Horace E. Scudder

Charleston, South Carolina,
18 December, 1901.

My dear Mr. Scudder:

It's a great scheme I've hit on (try it) — to come to Charleston to get a little quiet when you wish to write. The colonial dead in St. Michael's graveyard here are as lively interruptions as these good people who simulate life above the ground. They have one virtue and one use in the world — to entertain you. Their hospitality is of the sort that mellows you and leaves you to yourself.

And it brings to life all that's best and pleasantest in a man's memory. So it comes about that with the Cambridge days rising to the surface (they sometimes seem far off over the activities that have intervened), I find myself wishing you and yours a very happy Christmas; but you wouldn't (or mightn't) know it if I didn't say so. This, then, is the assurance of it. And I hope the year ahead of us will have a good store of health for you.

In the autumn of 1897 came Page's first great domestic

[1] Mrs. Robert N. Page.

sorrow. His North Carolina family had prospered since the old Cary days. In the late seventies his father had moved the family seat to Moore County, still trailing the pine trees that had always formed the matter and spirit of his life. The region then was forest; into it, Frank Page, assisted by four of his sons, built a pioneering railroad; as a result of their efforts, the Pinehurst region came into existence. Through the long years of his absence in the North, Page had maintained the closest association with his mother. The bond established between them in the early childhood days at Cary had never weakened. In his discouragements and disappointments she was the one to whom he always turned, and a triumph gave Page a sense of exultation largely because he could share it with her. His letters to her flowed constantly and, especially at Christmas time, he never failed to send his message, full of details of himself and his growing family. The memories of his early days had entered deeply into Page's being; the death of Catherine Page, therefore, made vivid again the influences upon which his own nature had been formed.

To Horace E. Scudder

Cambridge,
13 September, 1897.

My dear Mr. Scudder:

I send you hearty thanks for your letter. It is true, as you say, that a strange double relation comes between a man and his mother if she live till he reach middle life. Aware of this in a general way, I did not know it a month ago as I know it now; and I could not have guessed at the kind of loneliness that I have felt. Although I had seen her seldom for a good many years, she was a living presence not only in my own life but in the lives of every one of my

children. Two of my boys spent the whole summer in her house; and, since they have come home, they talk about her in a way that calls her to mind as living. Then, suddenly, the curtain falls! Death is a newcomer to us. My father had been married nearly fifty years. He had seen his eight children all grow to maturity and sixteen grandchildren come along, every one robust; and not a death in his family, till my mother died. Although he is not well, he is very brave and I get good reports from him or about him every day. Fortunately for him, my sisters are with him and have always been with him. They have for several years had charge of the household, and the daily routine of his life goes on as nearly as possible in the way that he had long been used to. Yet it may happen that I shall have to go to see him for the last time before a very long time. . . .

W. H. P.

"There is nothing more to write," Page said in a letter to his wife after the funeral. "It is all over. Nothing will be the same again. But there never were stronger or more noble men and women than these — my brothers and sisters — and I have never been gladder that I am of them and am with them."

CHAPTER IX

LITERATURE IN AN INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

I

NOW that the narrative has reached the midway period it may be profitable to pause for an interlude and survey the interest which, above all others, shaped Page's outlook and directed his career. What, after all, is the pre-eminent reality of human life? On this point Page has spoken with his usual definiteness. The greatest expression of the human spirit is literature, and the greatest literature is that written in the English language. "Of all concerns of men," wrote Page, in 1899, "of all kinds of work to which they turn their minds, of all arts to which they turn their skill, the one thing, the one supreme art, that marks the highest reach made by the intelligence and skill of the race is, of course, the great art of literature. We can never fix our lives right with reference to the things that have gone before, nor with reference to the great forces that shape us while we live and labour, unless we fashion them by the help of the great and wise men who have written our literature. Most of the things that concern us are transitory, most of the things that we worry about pass with us, and most of the things that we do or have, as the Scriptures put it, perish with the using; but, from the very dawn of civilization to our own time, the one great and stable thing whereby we may measure men and civilizations is great literature. Fortunately for us no race of men has ever risen in any land or in any time, that has left so long, so varied, and so noble a literature as the race to which we ourselves belong. The great literature of Greece,

the noble literature of Rome, the meditative literature of Asia — all these we could afford to see perish without regret, if the alternative were that our English literature should perish. It is almost a thousand years, to a year, since King Alfred died — who made it safe, you will recall, for a woman to go from one end of his kingdom to the other. He devoted his life not only to the establishment of his kingdom, but to learning and to the fostering of literature. From that time, a thousand years back, there has hardly been a year that great Englishmen have not wrought great deeds and great Englishmen told the story of them. In every land, circling the world with their prodigious activity, reaching into every branch of expression, they have spoken, they have sung, they have written; and we are the inheritors of the richest treasures that any men ever had."

Page put on paper, in numerous ways, what he conceived to be the principles of this art and his impressions of the writers who had practiced it. He did not have the diary habit, but he was accustomed, all his life — never more so than during his Ambassadorship — to jot down his thoughts of the passing moment — on men, books, social and economic developments, and general ideas; and his papers contain many memoranda giving his opinions on literature and its makers. He also frequently discussed these subjects in his letters, in his public addresses, and in his published writings. From these several sources, it is possible to assemble a fairly rounded philosophy of literature — and one which is especially pertinent to Americans, for it lays chief emphasis on its relation to the democratic order. Indeed, literature Page regarded as the one inevitable exponent of democracy, for it dealt with a thing so common as human life itself. The belief, more or less prevalent, that an aristocracy furnished the

most genial soil for dramatists and poets, that they throve with difficulty under democratic institutions, conflicted with Page's very definition — for the art of writing with him was simply life, its materials lay at the door of every human being, and it was greatest when its appeal was most elementary and most universal. Unless literature concerned itself with everyday affairs, then it was the merest dilettantism and a reprehensible playing with the noblest of the arts: poets and romancers who dwelt in a world of unreality, largely their own creation, aroused in Page an aversion that frequently blinded him to their excellences of mere technique. Here again, the important qualities were robustness and a cleaving to existent things. Like Plato, he sometimes estimated the spoken above the written word.

"Books are not literature," he wrote in one of his memoranda, "nor is learning literature. Literature grew before books were made; and the making of many books has hindered literature, a great critic has declared, perhaps more than it has helped it. Literature is not learning — but it is Thought. And it is not merely thought, but it is thought artistically expressed. Any book or any speech that has worthy thought expressed 'with curious care' is literature."

And the materials are everywhere present and as obvious as life itself:

The superstition sometimes grows up in great educational centres that somehow learning has to do with the making of literature. It has to do with its interpretation but very seldom has to do with its making, because when men become wise in books they are likely to get too far away from life. They do writing, indeed, but they seldom

make literature. They write learnedly but not well. They generally write a language that is not the language in which we speak. It is likely to be a speech that is far removed from the vernacular. There is no vehicle that can carry great literature — except now and then when a Milton arises — there is no vehicle, I repeat, that can carry great literature except those plain words that roll out of our mouths when we suffer great emotions, when we weep, when we pray, when we laugh. Those words we speak in the earnest moments of our life, those idioms that we use then — they are the clothing that takes the common thought and in the hand of a great master immortalizes it. Keep close, close, close to the idiom. . . .

The first lesson, then, that will be learned, is this — that all literature, especially English literature, is a thing that was made at home, of homely products, homely qualities, and not a thing that was separate from the everyday life of the people of the time in which it was made, or of any artificial thought, or of any far-off conscious influence of any sort. If you study literature in its making today, you will find that that which is best worthy of consideration is that which is made round about us, out of the commonest material. Sometimes we get the notion from our too exclusive dependence on books that literature is a thing of books. Literature existed before books. It would exist if every book were burned. It is independent of books except as they preserve it. It is a thing that has nothing to do with a far-off manner of speech, with a stilted vocabulary, or with anything that is remote from our common human life.

I will make certain illustrations of the working of this principle. Remembering that almost anything that is well enough said is literature, you have to remember only a second fact to have a clear grasp of what literature is —

viz.: Any subject is a good subject that has an abiding human interest, and that lends itself to good form. By an abiding human interest I mean this: — there are some things which every one has in common with every other one. The man who makes our literature seizes upon the things that are universal, so that when the great product is put before you, you see that it appeals to you as if it were spoken or written for you alone. To go back to an early period, read the stories that Chaucer wrote. He wrote about men and women for men and women who had the same passions, the same humour, and the same feelings that we have. When we master his vocabulary we see that he might almost have walked the streets and told his stories here — so far as their definite human interest goes — instead of writing them in England. When we remember that literature is made of common things, of universal things, and that it is literature because it was so well said, there is only one other consideration that we need have, namely, its form. You may see and feel subjects, you may express yourself satisfactorily for your purpose in your everyday conversation or in everyday writing, and yet not produce literature, falling short of it only because you have not the mastery of form which distinguishes those things that are permanent from those things that are transitory. But whenever a great writer comes, he has this difference from the rest of mankind — that he will say a thing in such fashion that, whereas if I said it you would forget it to-morrow, when he says it you forget it never; and you find yourself instinctively returning to it and repeating it because he has said it once for all. Consider Kipling. He throws into bold form the feeling that Englishmen have round the whole earth, and every man the instant he reads it, says to himself, "I knew that before." But nobody has said it in that direct ringing way; and

somehow it gets into our very marrow and sticks. That is the form-work of what we call genius.

To John Burroughs

8 January, 1898.

Dear Mr. Burroughs:

. . . We have been drifting into an unspeakably dumb time in literature. Nobody (but a few students of nature) has any inspiration. Our poets are pretty artificial things, stringing together rhymes in imitation of old rhymers. "Literature" has come to be a thing that the professional students of it look upon as apart from life. The novelists have the field and they cut all sorts of grotesque figures, playing "reformers," "historians," "preachers" — God knows what.

Now this artificial growth of public sentiment about Literature has been going on, steadily increasing in its departure from life, during your time. You have felt it, seen it, protested against it, gone to Whitman for relief from it, and felt the emptiness of the "angel-cake" schools and methods.

Why not take the development of your own literary creed — your own experience as a writer and reader — as the thread to string the story of this decline or departure on? You have read all the books that signify anything or nothing in the Barren Period and you have known all the futile efforts to get back to Life, and you have known the men who have made them. Such a story (the story of your own development and work being wrought into it) would set the Barren Period in its true light and be a correcting influence of prodigious value.

Page believed that this feeling for the everyday idiom

and for the simple and direct could not be planted in one's mind too early. When his friend, C. Alphonso Smith — the biographer of O. Henry — left the chair of English Literature at the University of North Carolina for a similar post at the University of Virginia, Page pointed out the advantages of this new opportunity in teaching his charges to love literature and to write.

To C. Alphonso Smith

Nearing England,
On R.M.S. Adriatic
May 5, 1909.

My dear Smith:

I read a few days before I left home that you had decided in favour of Virginia. My congratulations! Looked at from the outside, it doesn't seem very different in the chance for good work — Chapel Hill or Charlottesville. But you will have more companionship, a somewhat richer setting of tradition and you will be resident in a place further out of the woods. You'll have a better salary, too, I hope.

But, as I look at it, you'll have (most precious of all) the finest chance in the whole world to teach Literature, viz., to teach it by teaching your boys to speak it and to write it. We teach law, surgery, mechanics, engineering, farming, all the trades (all the things that we really teach) by having pupils *do* them — by practice and not alone by the study of samples of others' work. Now Literature must be taught in the same way.

You can send out in ten years more effective writers and speakers than now stand to the credit of any American institution of learning, if you have the simple courage of a deep conviction of this truth. Most of our best writers were not college men or women, you know; and the college,

as we now have it, by its study of Literature and of English, disqualifies men for production. You can have every university in the land following your lead in five years, if you teach by hard, long, continuous practice in idiomatic speech and writing— not in "literary" speech and writing.

Come to see me this summer (I'll be back by August first); and, if I don't prove my proposition, I'll forfeit my conceit.

A revolution in this whole matter is impending. Why shouldn't you lead it? I'm reading old John Bunyan on this ship. His idioms are a joy and his blacksmith style can open the door to innumerable Lincolns in our democratic literature — if they are made to practice it hours a day for four, five, or six years. We have no writers. You can train dozens of 'em.

To William Sharp[1]

September 7, 1898.

DEAR MR. SHARP:

I know that we should never agree upon this, but as I have already written you, the Rossetti circle has never attracted any serious attention in the United States except from a comparatively few persons who are enthusiastic on the subject. Rossetti's poems have never sold here sufficiently, I think, to warrant a decent American edition, and all the books and matter about him have fallen very flat indeed. . . .

The popular interest in the United States in Burne-Jones is not very keen. He is considered here to have been

[1] William Sharp (1855–1905), Scottish poet and man of letters, and author of a biography of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He is best known to the present generation for the books written under the name "Fiona Macleod."

a great artist not by reason of the peculiarities that characterized him and his art, but decidedly in spite of them. There is no more chance to arouse any interest in the pre-Raphaelite movement, in Morris, in Rossetti, or in the side of Burne-Jones which looked toward them — there is no more chance of arousing any interest in the United States in this phase of art and literature than there is in anything else which seems to the active, energetic American mind to be simply an affectation. . . .

To Anna McClure Sholl

January 4, 1899.

Dear Miss Sholl:

. . . To speak frankly, I cannot suppress a doubt concerning "the enduring element of Walter Pater's work." It may be my ignorance that causes me to make such a remark, but I very gravely question whether there is any "enduring element" in it. It is too far off, in style if in nothing else, from the fundamental heart of all humanity. When we turn Frenchmen, or Belgians, or Germans, or Italians, subjects of this class may interest us; but you may search the whole splendid development of literature which has expressed the activity and growth of the English race for more than a thousand years (and this is our particular inheritance) and you find nothing mystic in it. Such things as you find that are in any way akin to Walter Pater have been forgotten by the rough and energetic race to which we belong — forgotten in favour of those concrete, fundamental, far-flung lines of active ideas which dominate us. and from which we cannot get away even if we would. Rossetti, Pater, Maeterlinck — none of these has ever touched the English heart. . . .

This same instinct for the wholesome and the ennobling made Page shrink from the use of moral degeneration as the favourite theme of fiction and drama. He acknowledged the legitimacy of such subjects when used sincerely and not merely for the purpose of prurient exploitation, and perhaps no one has drawn better than he the line of demarcation.

To Elia Wilkinson Peattie

July 29, 1897.

Dear Mrs. Peattie:

. . . In answer to your inquiry about "discretion" — of course all the matter is determined every time by the way in which the work is done. The proper judgment to make of a great work of art, or a great presentation of life, is by the larger moral standard, and not by microscopic view. I think that in every case a novel that is really great, by reason of its greatness, refuses to offend the larger moral sense, not so much by the design of the author as by the necessity of its own existence. The proper way to go about it, it seems to me, is first to get your great novel; then these matters are likely to take care of themselves if the hand that fashions it shape it to a large enough standard.

"The most skilful playwright now at work in English," Page wrote, long before indecency on the stage had become such a pressing topic, "keeps steady to his use of immoral situations as material for his plays. Mr. Pinero is perhaps not guilty of using such material, as it is used in many French plays, for the love of it, but rather as it is used by Ibsen and the great contemporaneous German dramatists, because it is the natural matter of tragedy. The only eternally tragic things are the sacrifice of charac-

ter and the sacrifice of life. The loss of most other things — of fortune, for instance, or of any mere conventional advantage — is to a modern, democratic audience a subject of little concern. The one central tragedy of life that has always appealed most strongly to pity, and appeals now even more strongly than ever, is the wreck of womanhood. There seems yet no way, therefore, if a way will ever come, for the dramatist and the novelist who would use the strongest material of modern life for his work always to avoid this subject, even if he would."

The morbid and disheartening in literature also had no attraction for Page.

To Elia Wilkinson Peattie

July 17, 1897.

My dear Mrs. Peattie:

. . . I confess that I share your feeling regarding the prevalence of sad stories, and it seems to me time to change the fashion. Looked at philosophically, the subject, I think, is easy enough to understand. A generation ago, when there was the buoyancy of the first settlement of the West, there was one continuous picture of unprecedented energy and consequently of great vitality and generally of more than normal cheerfulness. But the grasshopper, and the mortgage on the farm, and the bad crop seasons, and other checks have come, so that the most conspicuous fact becomes the cheerlessness of life rather than its cheerfulness. But why should the story-teller follow too slavishly either the one temporary mood or the other? The large, bounding, completely full and satisfactory novel of Western life will touch both these moods, span them both, and show that under the energy of the pioneer and under the

unrest of the following period alike, there is an unshakable balance of character and large promise.

To Virginia Frazer Boyle

5 February, 1901.

My dear Mrs. Boyle:

Everything that you told me about John Westbrook is true and very much more. It is an admirably written story. There are several scenes of description in it that I shall never forget as long as I live, I think. Nor can I see what Mr. Alden [1] and Mr. Gilder [2] mean when they say, "change it."

Having said all this, I will surprise you when I say that I do not think that you ought to publish the story now; and I do not even believe that it would be successful as a book in the market — for one simple but (to my mind) overwhelming reason:

It is an unrelieved study of the most distressing form of disease.

Readers of novels are sane (most of them at least) and they will regard the book just as the great mass of persons who knew John Westbrook or saw him after he left his native village regarded him, as a pathetic figure, but as an unpleasant one nevertheless. Nobody cared to live with him but his disciple known to the church as John.

One thing counts in art, in literature, in life, as nothing else; and that is health. Disease may fascinate a few and for a morbid moment. But it is the wrong material for art, however good the art. True? Yes, disease is true. But that doesn't save it. Pathetic? Yes, beyond expression; but so is many a case in many a hospital. A tragedy of

[1] Henry Mills Alden, editor of *Harper's Magazine*.

[2] Richard Watson Gilder, editor of the *Century Magazine*.

souls? Yes, but it is not a tragedy that comes of striving but only of craziness — an insane tragedy, the tragedy of a lunatic asylum.

I should not, if I could, think of your publishing problems apart from a natural and normal literary career. I look at it as a development — consider it in its entirety. Looking at it in that way, it seems to me that you have in this story made an unfortunate selection of material. It may be well to publish it later — after you have put forth several other books and shown an orderly and progressive development of your literary career with other material. To publish it now will be a sort of deflection. The public will regard you as having gone to one side in the choice of your material — as having gone away from the natural and chosen the pathological. Put this story away.

Not one word of this will you regard as sound advice, I fear, because you know that you have written a good story — done a good piece of work. To the excellence of the workmanship, I bear enthusiastic testimony. But that isn't the main question, nor the larger one.

If you are sure that I am wrong, forgive me for (I will say) five years. Five years from to-night if you do not agree with me (or in case you publish the book and events do not confirm my judgment) I will — agree with you.

All which with humility, earnestness and honesty is the opinion of

Yours very heartily.

It would naturally follow from these views that Page would have little appreciation for a particularly barren department of writing — that of literary criticism. He granted that a handful of critics had perhaps accomplished something to the purpose, but the mass he looked upon as

the unprofitable trailers of a great art. "My own opinion, you know," he wrote his good friend, James Lane Allen. "Literary discussion and literary criticism have gone so far down, down, down, to the level of the mere journalist or to the level of the mere academic cults that it has ceased to be of any interest to me: it has become a form of professionalism, with a lingo of its own. I am applying this harsh condemnation not only to the matter of the bookshop journals but to pretty nearly all our recent critical output. Talk-ee-talkee-talkee — That's what it is."

He despised criticism, among other reasons, because it acted as a kind of barrier to literature. It was a crude fence built around a fruitful meadow — and its evil influence was that it kept without many souls who might otherwise venture into delightful fields:

"In discussing literature and in studying it, there are two aims. One aim is to broaden the horizon, to fill the mind, to grow — the aim of personal culture. So to read literature is every man's duty. But the way to do this is so easy that many men never find it out. It is simply to read the great books of the world, especially the great books in our own language — to read them intelligently, diligently, lovingly, and to re-read them, and not to make the mistake of reading about them. When a man has read Shakespeare once a year for half a lifetime, or Wordsworth, or Thackeray, or Mark Twain, or Kipling's 'Seven Seas' half a dozen times, why on earth should he waste his time in reading what some other man (who has probably read these same writers less often and less well than he) has to say about them? The unfortunate truth is, most persons who accept criticisms and read literary essays do not read great books; and here is where the damage is done. A man who is willing to surrender his own judg-

ment to another's soon loses his own judgment, and then he loses his stomach for vigorous literature and becomes content to feed on second-hand things. Since most literary essays are second-hand products but are accepted as short cuts to a knowledge of literature, they do positive harm by keeping well-meaning persons away from literature. There is reason to fear, for instance, that more women have listened to lectures on Browning and read essays about him than have ever read Browning himself. The intellectual life is not helped by literary essays and criticisms — except the very few great essays by great constructive minds. Writing them and reading them is a dissipating and enervating waste of time.

"The spirit of scepticism is the only safe spirit in the study of things human at least. After a long reading of the Iliad a teacher I once knew asked every member of his class to write out his opinion of the poem. Every boy presented a paper praising the wonderful rhythmic flow of the hexameters, the godlike portraitures of the heroes, the fine discrimination of character and all such unmeaning cant as the world is full of — every boy except one; and this one gave his opinion that the poem was dull, monotonous and too simple to interest him. His opinion was at once the worst and the best of all. He came furthest from the truth perhaps in his criticism, but he gave promise of a final seeing of the truth much more vividly than the others. For his judgment was his own judgment. He had not appropriated the worn-out sayings of others. . . ."

"In reading for your pleasure or in reading for suggestion, one good method is to take one great author — an author that you read not as a task, that you take up not from a sense of duty, but because you love him. Take one great master, whether he be old or modern, whether he

wrote in verse or in prose, whether he wrote fiction or history; select him (you know the one you like best). Make sure that he is a great one! Live with him. Turn to him every day. Read him, re-read him until he is a part of your permanent equipment; and then whatever overtakes you, in every experience that you have, you will find consolation when the experience is depressing and inspiration always; and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that one at least of the divinely appointed leaders who have spoken and written our conquering tongue, lived and lives to guide you as if he had lived for no other purpose at all."

II

Page liked to quote the remark of a friend — himself a man of great cultivation — made within the luxurious protection of the University Club of New York:

"All this rush and noise and madness for money," remarked the gentleman, gazing at the Fifth Avenue throng. "What a Babylon it makes of this vast city! Millions of men running over one another to get rich — highwaymanship without chivalry, robbery reduced to a science. If God in his just wrath destroyed New York to-night, not a man would be lost who would be worth anything to literature or to philosophy or to art. The level of the world's culture would be raised and not lowered by our utter annihilation."

Page liked to quote this wail chiefly to show how little sympathy he had with the conviction that underlay it — the impossibility that literature could flourish in an industrial, money-making era. Democracy and cultivation is a hackneyed theme — worn threadbare on countless commencement platforms and lecture circuits; and refuting the stale arguments against the development of the fine

arts in a nation such as the United States — the absence of a leisure class, the interest in ponderable things, the constant absorption in money-getting — Page was inclined to produce certain points on the other side. The vast material presented by the continental expanse and the seething vitality of American life must, he believed, necessarily find its spokesman. For the first time, the masses of men live in physical comfort. "Now there is much cultivation," said Page, "in physical comfort. The most pathetic chapter in human experience is that long chapter which tells of men's trying to thank God because he had deprived them of ease and had made life hard and insanitary. It was equivalent to thanking God for bad food and dyspepsia, for bad beds and rheumatism, for foul air and tuberculosis. When we first got running water in our houses a great impulse was given to culture." This physical comfort leads to greater activity and to a greater intermingling of human beings. "The best means of culture is association with the right kind of persons. To make instinctive acquaintances is a part of the machinery of our era. It is the distinct contribution that Industrialism has made to society. The comparative isolation of the pre-industrial era was a state of life that we should not like to go back to. Think of the loneliness of Emerson and of Carlyle, for examples. Our Industrial Era takes us on journeys everywhere about the world. It may even be said that no preceding generation knew what travel meant." Above all, Page insisted, democracy vastly extends the range of culture, inspires men to live in the present and future, instead of exclusively in the past, and brings them closer to life and to nature. "An American of half a century ago looked to England, perhaps to Paris; and if he were a classical scholar, to the regions of the Mediterranean. It was a small arc of a circle that his vision took in. Now such a

man looks to all the capitals of the world — east and west; and his horizon is incalculably wider. He may get cultivation from many arts instead of from one or two. His equipment includes not only new subjects but a coördination of the old subjects. He has not only books, but music, painting, sculpture, architecture — all the arts, besides the rich stores of science. The modern man is interested in the present as well as in the past, and more interested in the present than in the past. The old type of cultivated man was more interested in the past than in the present. If he were a classical scholar, he looked back to Athens in the time of Pericles as the crowning epoch of man's development. He would have preferred to live then than now — forgetting that two chances to one he would have been born a slave or a barbarian; and forgetting that he can buy the whole body of Greek literature now and casts of half the Greek sculptures for what a single copy of Homer would have cost him then. It was a natural tendency of the culture of an earlier time to look backward and to become detached from life. It is a healthful necessity that the cultivated man of our time shall be interested in the present and thus kept sane and balanced."

"If there were no other proof that our professional guardians of literature are the unconscious enemies of the very thing that they mean to encourage, proof enough is found in this single fact — that most of them are men who are themselves hopeless about American civilization. To them the future seems dark. Out of despondency literature never yet grew. If a man wish to add to our literature and if he fall into the mood of despair about democratic institutions and learn to sneer, he may make a career as a critic and lose his own soul, but he can add nothing to the creative impulse of his time.

"Perhaps every maker of literature, whenever he lived, has been obliged for his own salvation to keep aloof from the critical class. Certainly most literary men have done so during their productive periods. But, whatever may be true about the past, the hope of American literature now is not in men who produce or who feed on literary criticism. A man who wishes to write something at first hand will do better to play golf than to read current literary essays; for golf is cheerful and takes one outdoors. And two of the great qualities that have gone to the making of the literature of our race are cheerfulness and a love of outdoor life. As soon as you get a literary cult and a mere bookish life, you are in a fair way to get literary cant and 'despair of the republic.' A man who would make American literature now must feel, as all the greatest literary men of our race have felt, from Chaucer to Kipling and Mark Twain, a keen common interest in all kinds of men, and a kinship with them; and he must know and feel the strong positive forces of our life. Most of all, he must have mental health and hope. He must know (and if he have a fresh outdoor mind he will know) that it is out of a new national impulse that literature comes into being — just such an impulse as the United States now feels. That this impulse expresses itself chiefly in commercial ways is natural; but the impulse itself is worth a thousandfold more than its direct commercial results."

"What is lacking? Material? There never was a time in the history of the world when for every living form of literary work more good material seemed to be lying waste than now in our country. Contemplate the spectacle of the American people; their history and their activity; the dramatic fact of the Civil War; the unparalleled spread of well being since then; the conquest of the West; the social

revolution in the Southern States; the pathetic and heroic aspects of the double-race life there; the throbbing vitality of this very city; and then the eager intellectual curiosity of the people; their present almost morbid interest in their own history (men and women will devour any stale fish if you label it 'historical fiction'); the keen human sympathy which is ready to find something heroic in every genuine human experience; the immense range of new knowledge; the accumulation of new social experiences and phenomena — the Republic is to-day fuller of bounding life and the spirit of adventure, than little England was in Elizabeth's time, and the whole world to boot; and as for receptivity — all the people are on tiptoe. More knowledge; more scholars; more subjects; more readers; and incidentally, more money for good writers. And yet little of this material is wrought into good prose, and less of it into good verse."

To John Jay Chapman

20 March, 1897.

Dear Mr. Chapman:

When I said something about Kipling the other day you remarked that you had never been in India. Well, Kipling has been in the United States, and he has done a thing in the United States that may be worth talking about. I assume that you do not read serial stories, and you may not know the American yarn that Kipling is spinning called "Captains Courageous." That is an outdoor modern American tale, with a vengeance. He is trying to show the romantic aspects of the hustling American. I hear folks talking continually about his description of a journey across the continent in a special train.

Now by this sort of thing Kipling brings us into close

quarters with perhaps the most important literary question that Americans have to consider: Is the matter that he writes about such a subject mere yarn-spinning, or is it a successful effort to use modern American physical forces in literature? Is this sort of thing a temporary sensation — glorified newspaper work only — or is it something greater?

In this daring venture, Kipling tries to do in a story what he tried to do in rhyme the other day when he described the American as

> Enslaved, illogical, elate,
> He greets the embarrassed Gods, nor fears
> To shake the iron hand of Fate
> Or match with Destiny for beers.
>
> Lo! imperturbable he rules,
> Unkempt, disreputable, vast —
> &c., &c., &c.

Why will you not get the last five or six numbers of *McClure's Magazine* (the yarn is about to reach its conclusion there as well as in a number of newspapers) and read his rattling adventure? Does the thing measure up to any standard that entitles it to be regarded as literature?

WALTER H. PAGE.

As a contrasting picture to the absorption of the American in mechanical pursuits and in money-getting, Page liked to insist on one development that had come with the industrial democracy — and that was his intense enthusiasm amid the great aspects of nature. Not so accomplished in the countryside and in gardening perhaps as our British compatriots, the American is on more companionable terms with the outdoors in its largest proportions. And who shall say that the romantic possibilities

of a sequoia tree are not as fruitful as those of daffodils? Here, above all, was a native American note. "There has come with our industrial era," wrote Page, "whether it be a part of it or not, a better appreciation of the out-of-door world. It would be hard to exaggerate its culture-value. It is more than a distraction from money-getting and other forms of morbidity; for it is the adjustment of ourselves to Nature in a very literal and healthful way. Out of it is coming, too, a new art — an art that appeals instantly to a democracy. I mean the art of making the earth beautiful by landscape architecture, by tree-planting and by the cultivation of flowers. The most healthful æsthetic and physical pleasure comes from this increasing culture. The time will come when our continent from ocean to ocean will thus be made more attractive to cultivated minds than any other part of the earth's surface is . . . We have seen in our own time a new kind of literature created — the literature about nature, which is traceable not wholly to the work of Mr. John Burroughs and the school that has grown up since he began to write, but surely in large measure. And this new field of literature is a great and positive gain that this generation has over its predecessors — an unfailing source of pure joy. It has had very much to do with implanting our new love of outdoor life. Because of Mr. John Muir's writings, too, men have gone to the Yosemite and wandered over the Sierras and found new meaning in them; and they have become a part of the æsthetic assets of our people."

To John Muir

34 Union Square, New York,
25 November, 1901.

My dear Mr. Muir:

I have had a long and delightful talk with Merriam who (luckiest of men) had the fun and joy of seeing much of you during the summer; and his talk has spurred me to do what I have long had in mind, and long neglected in my busy life here. So I send you a lot of books and magazines to-day to show you what I am doing and to show you also how much I hope you will have a happy Christmas and forty or fifty more of them — as many more as you want and as you will need to get the great work done that you are doing. For you must have time before you die or quit to get the whole thing written down to suit you. California and Alaska will be here a long time after we are all gone; but your books must be got ready for the long life that awaits them, for they must live as long as the country remains safe from the final clash of things.

Your "Parks" is ready. My congratulations. That's a pleasing book — every chapter of it — an interpretive book. I read the last paper with the very sound of your voice in my ears and with a newly born resolution to go and see these things myself before I die. I have sent an order for a copy of the "Parks" to be bound in a special fashion for me; and I mean to have a copy of the old book that the Century Company issued (the one with the water ouzel on it) bound in the same way. I shall say to my sons: "When you are in doubt, here, here, is American literature, by a man who is Nature and whom you have seen and talked with." Then they will inwardly damn as I do the superficial scribblers who write simply to make books. And I'm going with them some happy summer, with the

mother of 'em and all, to see these great wonders of the world — these forests and glaciers.

Let me express, across this long silence, my own hearty appreciation and thanks for what I have read in the *Atlantic*; my best wishes; my hope that the toil of writing brings something of the joy that it gives your readers; and — my request for your photograph! Ease and strength to your pen!

To John Muir

34 Union Square, New York City.
November 8, 1902.

My dear Mr. Muir:

I have not written to you in answer to your most excellent and good letter of some months ago only because a man who publishes books and gets out magazines finds life disgustingly busy. Then I had another reason for silence for a little while. I had a sneaking hope that this winter I might get out to California; for to accept your kind invitation to go and see you has been one of the things that Mrs. Page and I have carried in our minds since the old Cambridge days as the first step towards the celestial state. Then, too, I am going to talk about books — the books that you are going to give us, books that will stand as long as the big trees that you have written about and will outlast the glaciers among the mountains.

To John Muir

Teaneck Road, Englewood, N.J.
December 21, 1905.

My dear Mr. Muir:

This is a belated Christmas letter to a man as far away as you are — belated in two senses; for I have had it in

mind all these months to say how Mrs. Page and I have counted it a great day for us that we spent at Martinez. But when I got back into harness, I was of course driven very hard — pleasantly always, but always so as to consume all the hours. The years become shorter as we grow older, and they don't compensate for their shortening by giving us more hours.

I hope that it is a pleasant winter for you all in the Valley. If you emerge from it during the time of year when the mountains do not call you, I wish you would remember how earnestly we should like to call you here. When are you coming to this dull part of the continent again?

With our kindest greetings and all good wishes to Mrs. Muir and to the young ladies — Mrs. Page's and mine.

To John Muir

133 E. 16th Street, New York City.
July 22, 1908.

DEAR MR. MUIR:

I fancy at this time of the year you are happily beyond the reach of anything so commonplace as a letter — communing with the mountains and the great forests. But a letter will reach you some time; and now when I have a chance to write it I send you this poor note, first of all to carry my greetings and good wishes and to make another expression of my abiding gratitude for all you have written and what I have learned from you and for the great privilege of knowing you.

Let this, therefore, be a simple and gentle reminder of my personal feeling and of my personal pride.

Page's belief in the high quality of American political literature has already been recorded.[1]

[1] See *ante*, page 110.

To C. Alphonso Smith

The Mansion House and Cottages,
Fisher's Island, New York.
July 25, 1910.

DEAR SMITH:

. . . I mean political literature. What are we here for? What do we stand for? What meaning has the Republic? Nobody will find that expressed so well anywhere as in the utterances of Jefferson and Lincoln and (in a smaller way) I'd add Roosevelt. Jefferson and Lincoln produced Literature, as sure as you are born; and Roosevelt in our time gives their ideas (or some of them) their modern application. Lincoln's inaugurals and some things from Jefferson (about free schools, about religious freedom, etc.) are, perhaps, more distinctly and significantly American than any other literature that we have produced. And old Walt Whitman caught the idea. Because he's clad in homespun form, is he taboo?

Let us see you before you sail. Mrs. Page and I are here for a fortnight — on a little island out at sea. We have the breeze and freshness of an ocean voyage without the swells or the cramped quarters or (thank Heaven) the roll of a ship. This island is anchored and steady with room enough to walk, to drive, to golf, to explore; and we have a sort of hurricane from the Atlantic this morning. The ladies have wraps and I am thinking of putting on a waistcoat.

And concerning the supreme artist in American political literature, and one of his masterpieces, Page has left this memorandum:

OF LINCOLN

Anything said well enough about any subject of universal human interest is Literature. In politics we have at two periods produced very noble and enduring literature. One period was the period of the construction of the Government — the period of the Revolution. The *Federalist* will serve as a good example of the political literature of that time. Another period was the time of the acute discussion of slavery. Lincoln's Cooper Union speech will serve as a good example of the political literature of that time.

February 27, 1860. Lincoln had never spoken in New York — and he was invited not to make a political speech in the ordinary sense of the word but to deliver a lecture on the political situation — one in a course of such lectures. Among other lecturers in the course were Mr. Blair of Missouri and Mr. Cassius M. Clay of Kentucky. The audience, as the committee that invited him explained, is to be "not an ordinary political meeting," for the lectures were meant to call out "the better but busier citizens, who never attend political meetings." William Cullen Bryant presided. Most persons in the audience had heard two finished and popular speakers on the same subject — the exclusion of slavery from the Territories. There seemed nothing new to say on the subject. Every political speaker in the country had discussed it for ten years — almost continuously; every newspaper had had hundreds of editorials about it. The subject, so far from being novel, was threadbare. The address was in a series of lectures. Lincoln might have added simply one more to the numberless good addresses on the subject. But one mark of a great man is that he knows an opportunity when he sees it and he finds an opportunity where a commonplace man sees only routine. All the larger New York papers published the

speech in full next morning and the *Tribune* declared that "no man ever before made such an impression on his first appeal to a New York audience." — The secret of the greatness of this analysis of the slavery question is not hard to find. It is easy to see why nobody knows now what Mr. Blair said in his course of lectures, or what Mr. Cassius M. Clay said, and why it has a permanent value that no speech of Mr. Seward or Judge Douglas has. It is the closely-knit style of Lincoln — but mainly the architecture which made what he said simply irrefutable. It is doubtful whether he used a single argument that had not been many times heard before; for in February, 1860, there surely was nothing new to say about slavery in the Territories. But he massed his facts artistically — convincingly — irrefutably. He fortified them with history. An annotator of the address has said: "No one who has not actually attempted to verify its details can understand the patient research and historical labour which it embodies. Neither can anyone who has not travelled over this precise ground appreciate the accuracy of every trivial detail." "A single easy, simple sentence of Anglo-Saxon words contains a chapter of history, that in some instances has taken days of labour to verify."

He fortified it with earnestness, too. But the charm of the speech, its convincing quality and its permanent quality is a sort of prophetic tone that runs through it — which is really an imaginative quality. The language is severely plain — unrelieved in its earnestness and seriousness; but all through it and round about it is the play of a great political imagination. The speech has a plan — an artistic form — as artistic as the plan of a great cathedral or of a symphony; it has a background and an approach; it is massive, colossal in fact, but it has beautiful proportions.

Other speeches — most other speeches on the same subject — have been forgotten because they were formless. Lincoln's is remembered not because it was Lincoln's: on the other hand, Lincoln was Lincoln because he made just such speeches. This very speech shows every great quality of his character — except perhaps his humour, which, it is said, he supplied here and there by his manner in delivering it. It shows his grim Cromwellian earnestness, his firm grasp and great reach of mind, his fairness, his generosity. In all American literature no other man has so strong and good an argumentative style as he. If he is a colossal figure in our history, he is no less a supreme master of speech.

The man who, in Page's belief, had the "largest intellectual outlook of any American of his time, the firmest grasp on the widest range of essential knowledge," was "John Fiske, philosopher, historian and master of a noble prose style." Fiske had that "sense of form" which Lincoln had, and which, in Page's view, was essential to any writing making pretence to literature.

There is one great man now[1] finishing his series of volumes of the history of our country, into whose method of work it is an inspiration to look. I mean Mr. John Fiske. He was born with a sense of form. Many other men can write narratives, and put facts in their proper chronological order; but he takes them and groups them as an artist, so that there is the proper shading here and the proper emphasis there; and his facts and groups of facts march in a conquering way. He spent, as you know, the laborious first half of his life in general preparation for his great task, and steadily laid the foundation for a permanent fame, first, as a philosopher, getting ready all the while for the

[1] Written in 1899.

philosophical treatment of the great series of events which led up to the development of our life in the American democracy. The story of that development is one of the most inspiring stories of man's work done thus far in human history. Seeing that he had a subject which will live and forever move men because it is a story that carries along with it the hope of the whole human race, he did not begin the actual composition of his series of great books until he had almost reached what we call middle age. Even when he went to work, having mastered all literatures, and seen the bearings of the scientific study of history and of all the other great departments of science, he went to work first to put together in proper proportion that great series of pictures, and that great march of events which he has put down in "The Discovery of America." He was not content to tell in the old way the story of Columbus coming forth over a great waste of ocean, stumbling on what he thought to be India. What he did was first to make a picture of the whole world as it existed before that event, of civilization as it had bloomed and almost withered. Then he made a picture of the savage continent on this side of the ocean, where red men had grown up developing certain beginnings of civilization, roaming over great forests and waging war to no purpose with one another. Then out of the push and restlessness of religious, social and political life in Europe, as if ordained by God, he explains how and why the mariner set forth. As the story proceeds it gathers up almost all history in its background, showing the condition of the whole world. You read of Columbus very much as you read of Ulysses in Homer, and at last you see opening up before you the prospect of the civilization that we have built and a new epoch in the development of the whole human race. These facts, almost all of which were known

before Dr. Fiske was born, he has had the genius to take in hand as an artist; and we have in panorama all the great facts of the Old World before this prodigious discovery, and you feel in the event a premonition of the great things that were to come; and when you put the book down, you say, or you feel, "Here is indeed a great story greatly told." Such pieces of great literature, you will observe, are not produced by divine inspiration; they come only by endless and prodigious toil. There is no man on earth who toils so hard or so conscientiously as the producer of great literature.

In another field of intellectual work the American democracy had justified itself, at least in one conspicuous instance — that of scholarship in letters:

A man lately died in Philadelphia who represented the finest type of the leisurely scholar, and whose taking away is a loss to the spirit and mode of life of which there is never likely to be too much in the United States. Dr. Horace Howard Furness knew more about Shakespeare perhaps than any other man of his time; he had more information about the plays, their sources and texts than any other one man perhaps has ever possessed since Shakespeare died. For half a century, while other men were busy doing other (probably more practical) things, Dr. Furness was studying the works of the great Elizabethan dramatist. Forty-one years ago he published — as the first of his long series of what he called the *Variorum Shakespeare* — a collection of the texts of "Romeo and Juliet," with elucidations drawn from the vast body of criticism and annotation in all languages — the first of fifteen volumes, every one a monument of patient erudition.

Naturally amiable, his serene kindliness of nature was

rendered warmer rather than drier, more joyful rather than more serious, more sympathetic, friendly and enthusiastic rather than self-centred, by a life-time of devotion to bookish study. Doctor Furness, in his delightful home, surrounded by his great library, in the midst of manuscripts, pictures, relics, and memorials of the drama in its most favoured hands, lived a tranquilly happy life. For his seclusion from the strife of modern activity, his occupation with a problem of the past, did not put him out of sympathy with his fellows.

Neither did his deafness. His friends will remember him always as he seemed to be: with a smile of affection and eager expectation on his face and a trumpet to his ear. Whenever he walked out he carried a card on which was written: "Don't blame the driver. It was not his fault. I am deaf."

The world to-day, with so great need of the best energies of the best men in the solution of its pressing problems, with so many fascinating tasks of progress to be done, pays too little heed to cloistered scholarship. Yet it is a better place because even one such scholar has lived in it — not only because of what he did, but more because of what he was.

Of several other writers Page has left written estimates:

The one-hundredth anniversary of Longfellow's birth falls this month, and it will be celebrated in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in many schools throughout the country — properly too; for while some self-conscious literary folk of this generation affect to despise his poetry (which, of course, is free of "problems" as it is free of obscurity and of morbidity), the wholesome and natural multitude of good people even yet read Longfellow, and

will read him many a year after many more pretentious poets are forgotten. Several years ago, Mr. Howells wrote in *Harper's Magazine* an article which he called "The White Mr. Longfellow." If you have never read it, read it now and thereby strengthen your literary sanity and build up your good sense and sound judgment about the influence of the simple in art.

And Mr. Howells himself is this month seventy years old — seventy good and beautiful years productive of work which has made many men and women better and not one worse; for he has not put a wrong thought nor a low suggestion into any mind. All his writing is high and clean and clear and graceful, if not exciting. His best stories were the stories of his earlier period; but at no period has he written to our lower selves. He is himself as gentle as his style is; and it is a proud thing that we have such a man busily writing with his old grace, and yet likely to keep on writing in his gentle temper all his way to the end. For, after we come to know somewhat of life and have recovered from the juvenility of being "literary," we value more and more highly the writing that is clear and gentle; and we love more and more the men who have kept their pens true to the decency and the dignity that underlie American life.

That Page would have liked Bret Harte and Frank Norris — the latter a personal friend and associate in editorial work — might be assumed from his insistence on the relation between literature and life:

It is a very happy observation of a writer for the New York *Sun* that Bret Harte had the good fortune to live to see his work regarded as classic; for there is no room for

difference of opinion concerning the originality of his contribution to literature. "The Luck of Roaring Camp" was immediately recognized as a fresh and new piece of work and it opened the way to his literary fortune. The many literary sensations that we have since felt have naturally somewhat dimmed the recollection of the excitement that was caused by his sudden bound into universal attention. But the noteworthy fact is that he came into public appreciation to stay. His later books have seemed to many readers too much like the second working of the rich vein that he discovered; but the richness of the vein has never been gainsaid. There has been no more original story teller in American literature nor (to those who have a taste for rough and robust life at first hand) a more delightful one. He lived to finish his work and he earned the gratitude of all English-speaking mankind and of many men of other tongues also. If every phase of American experience had had its interpreter as he was the interpreter of the life of early California what a literature we should have! It may be said that no man knows American life or American literature who has not reread at least his early tales and poems. And he did a service to our literature that is in one way even greater than the addition to it of volumes of fresh delight, for he taught us that literature is a thing made directly out of human life and not out of books. How much our later writers of the best work owe to this lesson nobody knows, but the debt is an incalculable one.

Other writers, some by choosing historical and some by choosing social subjects, have interpreted various phases of American life; but Frank Norris had a larger conception of it — a conception that included its vast economic significance — perhaps than any other writer of fiction. He

stood firmly, too, at a time of sensational "successes" in fiction, to his artistic convictions. Many a writer of real ability has been dazzled and has suffered a change of ideals because of the financial success of cheap work; but he held true with an heroic persistence to the best that was in him. He knew that he could write a swashbuckling romance, and he was ambitious for success and he was eager, too, for the financial rewards of his work. He could at any time have made a much larger income by writing sensational books, but he worked on, year after year, unswerving and content with the nobler aim.

After practicing his art in his earlier stories, which all showed originality, and after outgrowing certain obvious faults that marked his youthful works, he had, while still young, found a great subject. The strong grasp of his imagination and his mastery of his art were just beginning to show themselves. Here was a man, then, who, having done most noteworthy and, we think, lasting work in his youth, died just as he was reaching the easy command of his powers. The pity of it comes keenly to those who look out over American literature now in the making and see so little genuinely original work.

To those who knew Mr. Norris, his death brings a deeper loss than the premature close of a brilliant literary career. He was a strong and lovable personality. His youthful and beautiful face, crowned with gray hair, wore a smile for all his friends. He showed such a rare genius for friendship that the loss to literature is swallowed up in the loss of a friend and companion. He carried with him always an atmosphere of cheerful earnestness. He was a noble man — strong and gentle and brave and true. The memory of him is so precious a possession to those who lived and worked with him that they will carry it as an uplifting influence all their lives long.

To C. Alphonso Smith

133 E. 16th Street, New York City.
June 7, 1910.

My dear Smith:

We had the sad experience of attending poor O. Henry's funeral to-day, and I thought you might like to hear the few things that there are to say about it. As I suppose you have seen by the newspapers, he was taken to the hospital Friday and he died Sunday morning. The truth, I suspect, is that he has been dying a long time. He led a life for many years that was as far removed as possible from the scientific care of himself. He ate and drank what he pleased and took no exercise, and even to the very last wrote stories and told anecdotes about the absurdity of the doctors. His closest friends here had long made an effort to induce him to take some sort of care of himself, but without success. He ought to have lived, of course, very many years more, and it is a great shame and pity that he didn't.

At the Little Church Around the Corner, where his funeral was held, there was quite a gathering of the story-writing people and the publishers, and the literary folk of the town, and others whom I didn't know. It was all very simple and sad.

You, whose business it is to educate youth, for the love of Heaven bring within the range of what we call education the necessity of common sense in the simple art of living — of eating and of taking a reasonable care of one's self. For the great laws of nutrition give no exemption even to men of genius.

III

Naturally Page had the deepest interest in the standard American writers — especially Emerson, Hawthorne, and

Thoreau, to whom, as an editor, he was seeking constantly to introduce new generations of readers. His attitude toward the writers of his own Southern country emphasizes once more the viewpoint of simplicity and naturalness with which he approached all literary questions. Page did not esteem highly the most popular Southern writers. The *ante-bellum* romancers — and many of more recent date — seemed to him to be artificial; they did not dwell in a world of reality, and thus missed that association with life without which there can be no literature.

To William P. Trent

January 6, 1896.

My dear Mr. Trent,

. . . The historic truth, I suspect, about the pictures of the old life in fiction is that it (the fiction) took the life of a very few families as typical of the whole population and made a picture of a grandiose existence such as men and gods never saw. But I only suspect: I have only a vague notion of what these old books contain; nor indeed can I now (I have not looked the subject up at all nor tried to refresh my jaded memory) recall the books themselves. I have a dim recollection of a grand kind of life vaguely set forth — all somehow beyond the reach of ordinary mundane influences. All this floats back from the impressions of certain books which I must have run across in my youth.

Then comes the war-time. Was there much fiction about that? Whether fiction or not, there are a few little books that give very vivid and interesting pictures of life then. These, too, I have almost forgotten. I recall only that I have one such, — "A Southern Woman's Story"; but there are others. This period (or the latter part of it) came

into that big crop of war stories wherein the wounded Union lieutenant always married the Southern angel who nursed him "back to life." This crop I distinctly remember — as froth chiefly. And these, I fancy, are not worth a very great deal.

Then there are the writers that deal with the post-bellum era — Cable, Tourgée; now Thomas N. Page (see Scribner's) and his Marse Chan series; Joe Harris; Harry Stillwell Edwards; Miss Murfree; "Christian Reid" and a dozen women or more. Is life as it goes on, as it is and as it aspires to be, the thing that these people have severally represented it to be? — Of course, one cannot ask the story-teller to be statistically accurate, nor photographic. But a novel nevertheless has a certain spirit and atmosphere that is the true spirit and atmosphere or that is false. . . .

To William P. Trent

September 5, 1896.

My dear Trent:

. . . Take any Northern or English (or outside) man who has ever written about the South, and when you or I read his book, however instructive and interesting it may be in many ways, we know that he was an outsider; he can't catch the real genius of the people. I have often thought how very provincial the South must be, by this measure — that a Southerner can always feel that a stranger never touches quite the right key. This is as true as it is true that no stranger can talk "nigger." Haven't you ever been struck with the dismal failure of every such effort you ever heard? — a worse failure than we make when we try to pronounce French or than Frenchmen make when they try to talk English.

Just as on one side the outsiders' talk about a new South

has missed the inner spirit, so on the other side the Southerner's own interpretation of himself has been the very comedy of error because his measurement of civilization is by a false standard.

Two old ladies went from Lexington, Virginia, a few years ago — they had never been anywhere before — to Philadelphia. When they were telling the wonders they saw one of them said — "Really, sister Lizzie, these folks in Philadelphia — would you believe it? — really and truly think that their families are just as good as ours." — Did you ever happen to read old Dr. Albert Taylor Bledsoe's review of Hawthorne's novels? That's the most humorous comment by a Southerner on Southern life that, so far as I know, is extant. What he says about Hawthorne — that isn't the point at all — but the overwhelming condescension with which he takes up the subject and goes on to praise the literature of New England — that is superb! You would swear, if you didn't know better, that the old Doctor himself wrote a great romance every morning and that his Virginian neighbours, any one of them, could have done "The Scarlet Letter" any week they chose — with improvements. Yet he grants that Hawthorne did pretty well! . . .

To Edwin Mims [1]

Garden City, N.Y.
October 6, 1911.

Dear Mims:

It's this way: a very small part of mankind has, or has ever had, an active intellectual curiosity. The desire to know is a quality that a very small proportion of the hu-

[1] Biographer of Sidney Lanier, and at present Professor of English Literature at Vanderbilt University, Tennessee.

man race has at any one time felt. All Asia except Japan has stood still for centuries for lack of this mental quality. So, also, Africa. So, also, it would have been, of course, in Europe, except for a little handful of men who are the real leaders in each nation. Now it is unfortunate, but it is true, that an infinitesimal part of the population of our Southern States, for the last hundred years at least, has had any intellectual curiosity. If you had the names of all the men you know in North Carolina written down in a book, and you were to go over them one by one, I think you would be astonished to see how few have ever shown this quality. They are content with the knowledge that they have. I don't know whether this is a psychological result of the dogmatism that followed the slavery controversy or whether it is the result of rural life and isolation — or more likely it is the result of physical causes such as hookworm and malaria. But, whatever it is the result of, the one thing that differentiates the mass of Southern men from the mass of Massachusetts men, say, is this lack of intellectual curiosity. . . .

. . . There is no reason for discouragement. I expect our people to show at last (I mean a considerable mass of the people) the same intellectual curiosity that a certain number of people show in England and in New England and in our Western States. In other words, the grandchildren or the great-grandchildren of the men that you are now teaching will develop this quality, provided in the meantime the women that they marry are also properly taught. But for this generation or the next, don't fool yourself. A few people among them read a few books. But this is the most you can hope for. Suppose you had an accurate enumeration of all the white people who reached, I will say, the age of thirty or more in North Carolina during the last hundred years, and then a list of the books that had been ac-

tually read in the borders of the State, what fraction of a book per person do you suppose it would figure out?

Don't be discouraged, therefore. It is a great deal better now than it ever was before. A man here and there will take fire, just as one of your students will take fire here and there permanently. How many of them do you suppose have read two books of intellectual value since the first of last January? . . .

It is not surprising, though it may be somewhat shocking, that Page had little regard for the greatest of Southern writers. Yet in his choice of subjects, his prevailing note of depression and despair, his constant living in a phantasmagoria of his own creation, Poe certainly offended all the principles that Page respected as the basis of veracious writing. "Twenty-five years ago," he wrote, "when I was at college in old Virginia, Edgar Allan Poe was held up to the college man as the literary model. Never was there a more degrading influence than this picture of Poe as a genius. Poe wrote one poem which embodied all the melody of his genius, a thoroughly morbid thing which was in keeping with his life. Then he wrote a number of startling tales, artificial stories, and not at all in line with the literature of wholesome character, depicting wholesome American life. Poe belongs to the decadence from beginning to end."

Whatever one may think of this as literary criticism, it certainly has value as depicting Page's own character and his instinctive demand for the salubrious — what he would call the Shakespearean — element in life and literature. Yet this was an early estimate; the time came when Page did Poe greater justice. In the noisy opposition raised to Poe's admission to the Hall of Fame at New York University, Page at once broke a lance in favour of the poet.

His comment showed that the greater maturity of his latter days had somewhat changed his judgment, though his appreciation is still qualified.

"Edgar Allan Poe," he wrote, "might be described as the man who made the Hall of Fame famous. He made it famous for ten years by being kept out of it, and he has now given it a renewed lease of fame by being tardily admitted to it. The Hall of Fame, while a worthy enterprise, is not an official institution; and, though the classic colonnade on New York University Heights represents a happy thought, it does not confer the distinction which its administration may or may not recognize. It is safe to say that it was through its refusal to enshrine the name of Poe that this Valhalla became known to a very large number of people who otherwise would never have heard of it at all.

"Poe's fame was none the less assured though for a few years malignant fate sat by and smiled — the fate that had pursued in life and persecuted in memory the man whom Europe has always acclaimed our foremost literary genius. Poe's was a singularly ironic fate. His life was one of penury and sorrow. The generation in which he lived, dominated by the New England school of critics, whom he ridiculed and flouted with grotesque merriment, had scant appreciation for him; the generation succeeding, brought up on Griswold's vindictive biography, had less. But his genius finally burnt its way through the fog of slander concerning his character and through the equally dismaying fog of the idea that literary merit is to be marked up or down in accordance with the personal habits of its possessor.

"No situation could have been contrived more to delight the irony of fate than this: that the Hall of Fame should so long have been closed against the man who needed the

honour of its recognition less than any writer who had been admitted, and that his admirers should have clamoured for the empty honour — some of them with claims in his behalf that could not possibly have been substantiated. Apart from any formal estimate of the genius of Edgar Allan Poe, it remains that he wrote some of the best short stories that the world enjoys — that he taught Coppée, de Maupassant, and Conan Doyle; that he was the acutest critic that America has known and the ablest master of verbal technique so far developed among English-speaking men; and that he wrote (amidst a good deal of drivel) a little of the most delicious verse in the English language. While that language endures, men who speak it will confess the shivering delight of 'The Raven' and 'Annabel Lee,' the melancholy splendour of 'The Haunted Palace,' and the haunting melody of 'Ulalume.'"

The two Southern poets whom Page really loved were Sidney Lanier and Henry Timrod. Perhaps his interest in both men was influenced by the fact that they were associated with the memories of his youth. Lanier, while Page was a student of Gildersleeve at Johns Hopkins, was playing the flute in the Baltimore orchestra, and occasionally lecturing on poetry and expounding his theories of metric, in Hopkins Hall. At that time Lanier was not much known; his reputation scarcely extended beyond his personal circle. Yet the youthful Page at once insisted that he was a man of genius — a conviction that became stronger as years went on. "Don't be a fool, like everybody else," he said to a friend, "and not see that this is fine poetry."

Timrod he could not have failed to take to his bosom, for the author of "The Cotton Boll" — that title certainly implied a getting close to observed life in the South — was part of his memories of his great grandmother Barclay's

home at Barclaysville.[1] It was on her bookshelves that the boy first found his volume of this neglected poet.

There are some acquaintances that we make which always abide with us so pleasantly that we never forget the occasion of their making. The time and scenes of the dawning of an early friendship last as long as the remembrance of the friendship, and are linked eternally with it. So to me is my acquaintance with Timrod's poetry. It was in the late summer. I was spending the last days of a vacation at a lovely old country-place. My kind old great-aunts seemed this time even more than usually gladdened by my visit; and the days had nothing but pleasure in them for me. At that good old place with those good old people, where I was all that was young, I felt that somehow my young life touched the old Southern life that is gone, and came in communion with much of its spirit. For, believe me, we, the unfolding of whose lives has fallen in these strange late Southern days, in spite of all we have by inheritance and by tradition, lack something, and something that was very good, of the old time. If we are the gainers of much, we are also the losers of that something which gave a romantic nobleness to the lives of our fathers. Their days seem separated from us, not by a decade or two of social and political change, but as if by the whole intervening centuries.

During that visit I was reading Keats, I remember; and it was my habit to take the book with me on a long morning walk through the woods. One morning before breakfast, I was tumbling over the old books in the glass-doored book-case, and I found Timrod's poems! Since my last looking, it had entered those shelves, where little that was new had entered for many a year. I took it down

[1] See *ante*, page 76.

from its companionship with Clark's Commentaries and somebody's treatise on the Diseases of Horses (with long, f-shaped S's). I read Mr. Hayne's sketch of the poet's life before breakfast-time. At breakfast the old folks and I had a long talk about the war and about poor Timrod. On my walk that morning, I took this book instead of Keats. Thus it was during those morning strolls along lonely paths through the woods, that I first came to know Henry Timrod. He did not seem any new voice that spoke from the great infinite; nor did I place him in my boyish canon among the eternal. But he seemed to tell me much of that time which I remembered too dimly to know, and of the feelings men had then. He did not appear great and venerable, but so pleasant and tender that I found a rare delight in him; and I claimed him at once as another friend among my book-friends. I did not then analyze my reasons for liking him; nor do I now attempt to do so. . . .

What is there in our history, in our society, in our life, that is poetically graspable? One thing, surely, if none other — our war; our war, not so much in the battle-field sense, nor in the political sense, but socially. . . .

And this made Timrod. It gave his poetic powers something to seize. In the wide, empty world of dreams, he would have found little that he could have moulded into reality for us. The hopes and the despairs, the glories and the glooms of that wild time made all men frantic; and he sang their frenzy. Without this he would have written the "Vision of Poesy," and dreamed out sonnets about vague longings, but hardly more; and many have done better things than these and missed immortality. He could hardly have made as much out of nothing as Poe made; and we should no doubt have cared less for him than for Poe. But the spirit of the time that filled all men in some

measure, filled him, that he could sing it even more abundantly. The offspring were "Carolina," "A Cry to Arms," "Ethnogenesis," "Christmas," "Address at the Opening of Richmond Theatre," "Spring," etc.; and it is these that we are charmed by.

Just in this fact of Timrod's poetry being war-poetry consists its permanent worth. Every student of the history of the spirit of a time, and not merely of the events, knows how splendid a light a true little poem often gives where elaborate chronicles of deeds leave the true secret in the dark. Thus Timrod, for one phase, in one tone, will have a permanent value apart from the purely artistic value of his work. But artistically considered, it is probably the best poetry of the war. The Northern poets wrote much that is valuable literature, and that will not die with the accomplishment of its primary purpose; but, for real poetry, we must look to the Southern side; and, of all the songs the war inspired, there are none comparable to Timrod's.

Page set little store upon the vast amount of Southern literature dealing with the negro. He had a high regard for "Uncle Tom's Cabin" — not as a tract or a political discussion, but as a story.

"Did you never reflect," he once asked, "that the real greatness of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and also its almost unparalleled popularity in all modern languages and in all lands, consist rather in the outright pathos of its picture, than, as the Northern critics generally assume, in its sermon against slavery? Our negro life is a rich field, not only for scientific work in social science, but right material also for purely literary purposes; and it goes without saying that nobody but those to the manner born can appreciate its richness."

The negro had, however, inspired two great books. "The literature of the negro in America," he said, "is colossal, from political oratory through abolitionism to 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and 'Cotton is King' — a vast mass of books which many men have read to the waste of good years (and I among them); but the only books that I have read a second time or ever care again to read in the whole list (most of them by tiresome and unbalanced 'reformers') are 'Uncle Remus' and 'Up from Slavery'; for these are the great literature of the subject. One has all the best of the past, the other foreshadows a better future; and the men who wrote them are the only men who have written of the subject with that perfect frankness and perfect knowledge and perfect poise whose other name is genius."

"The literary and social conventionalities," Page wrote of Booker T. Washington's "Up from Slavery," "that we put as a hedge about literature, and all the little fuss and foolery of commonplace achievement, vanish in the presence of a man who is called and ordained for a task like his, and who writes as naturally as he works. . . . I got the cue to Mr. Washington's character from a very simple incident many years ago. I had never seen him and I knew little about him, except that he was the head of a school at Tuskegee, Alabama. I had occasion to write to him and I addressed him as 'The Rev. Booker T. Washington.' In his reply there was no mention of my addressing him as a clergyman. But when I had occasion to write him again, and persisted in making him a preacher, his second letter brought a postscript: 'I have no claim to "Rev."' I knew most of the coloured men who at that time had become prominent leaders of their race, but I had not then known one who was neither a politician nor a preacher; and I had not heard of the head of an important coloured school who

was not a preacher. 'A new kind of man in the coloured world,' I said to myself — 'a new kind of man surely if he looks upon his task as an economic one instead of a theological one.' I wrote him an apology for mistaking him for a preacher.

"The first time that I went to Tuskegee I was asked to make an address to the school on Sunday evening. I sat upon the platform of the large chapel and looked forth on a thousand coloured faces, and the choir of a hundred or more behind me sang a familiar religious melody, and the whole company joined in the chorus with unction. I was the only white man under the roof, and the scene and the songs made an impression on me that I shall never forget. Mr. Washington arose and asked them to sing one after another of the old melodies that I had heard all my life; but I had never before heard them sung by a thousand voices nor by the voices of educated negroes. I had associated them with the negro of the past, not with the negro who was struggling upward. They brought to my mind the plantation, the cabin, the slave, not the freedman in quest of education. But on the plantation and in the cabin they had never been sung as these thousand students sang them. I saw again all the old plantations that I had ever seen; the whole history of the negro ran through my mind; and the inexpressible pathos of his life found expression in these songs as I had never before felt it.

"And the future? These were the ambitious youths of the race, at work with an earnestness that put to shame the conventional student life of most educational institutions. Another song rolled up among the rafters. And as soon as silence came, I found myself in front of this extraordinary mass of faces, thinking not of them, but of that long and unhappy chapter in our country's history which

followed the one great structural mistake of the Fathers of the Republic, thinking of the one continuous great problem that generations of statesmen had wrangled over, and important men thought about, and that had so dwarfed the mass of Englishmen in the Southern States as to hold them back a hundred years behind their fellows in every other part of the world — in England, in Australia and in the Northern and Western States — I was thinking of this dark shadow that had oppressed every large-minded statesman from Jefferson to Lincoln. These thousand young men and women about me were innocent victims of it. I, too, was an innocent victim of it. The whole Republic was a victim of that fundamental error of importing Africa into America. Here was the century-old problem in all its pathos seated singing before me. Who were the more to be pitied — these innocent victims of an ancient wrong, or I and men like me who had inherited the problem?

"I had long ago thrown aside illusions and theories and was willing to meet the facts face to face, and to do whatever in God's name a man might do towards saving the next generation from such a burden. But I felt the weight of twenty well-nigh hopeless years of thought and reading and observation; for the old difficulties remained and new ones had sprung up. Then I saw clearly that the first way out of a century of blunders had been made by this man who stood beside me and was introducing me to this audience. Before me was the material he had used. All about me was the indisputable evidence that he had found the natural line of development. He had shown the way. Time and patience, and encouragement and work would do the rest."

An earlier chapter tells of the effect which the publication of "Uncle Remus" had made upon Page, a young

man of twenty-six, and of his visit to Joel Chandler Harris. Time only confirmed his conviction that this character was an immortal contribution to American literature, as is evident from the following, written twenty years after the first reading:

"There is not in the whole range of literature a happier example of the homely quality of the material of which great literature may be made than the material that went to the making of 'Uncle Remus.' This is so great a piece of literature that if all histories and records of slave-life in the South were blotted out, a diligent antiquarian thousands of years hence could reconstruct it in its essential features from the three human figures that Mr. Harris has used — Uncle Remus, the little boy, and Miss Sally; and Miss Sally is a mere shadow figure and the little boy is only a part of the simple machinery of the book. In these three are the essential elements of the old Southern life, so universal and so common to all experience is every incident, attitude and tone chosen by the great master who made them. The substance of the immortal book is nothing but simple folk-stories, some of which if not all are thousands of years old and in some form or other had long ago been written down. But Mr. Harris put them in the Georgian idiom, gave them the twist or turn of thought that marks them as indigenous — made them native — and gave them the setting that will forever hold them in our English speech. . . . Those that first read his stories, when they were children, now have children (and some of them grandchildren) who read them; and all ages alike take on the mood of childhood under their charm. Few people knew Harris personally — none but his neighbours and such pilgrims as made their way especially to see him; for he was abnormally shy and seldom went from

home. But 'The Sign of the Wren's Nest' has now become a sort of shrine. Few men achieve so enviable a thing as this — to win and to hold the gratitude of a nation of children."

Page himself had much to do in shaping the careers of two modern Southern writers. His greatest "find," as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, was Miss Mary Johnston. Her first manuscript, "Prisoners of Hope," fell upon Page's desk at a time when the author was utterly unknown — it was, indeed, her first attempt at a sustained story.

The appreciation with which Page read this manuscript, and the eagerness with which he began immediately its publication in the *Atlantic*, forms an eloquent commentary upon the belief, too prevalent, that only the offerings of experienced writers have much chance in the sanctum of a great magazine.

Naturally there was much interest in Boston concerning the personality of Miss Johnston, and Page, in the course of a trip through the South soon afterward, stopped off at Birmingham, Alabama, to make the acquaintance of his "discovery." He bore away from this meeting the uncompleted manuscript of another romance on which Miss Johnston was then engaged — a work that, when published under the title of "To Have and to Hold," proved a far greater success than the first one.

The picture Page sent to Mr. Mifflin of this young writer — who, unlike so many others, quickly demonstrated her ability to repeat a success — is certainly worth preserving.

To George H. Mifflin

Birmingham, Alabama.
23 February, 1899.

My dear Mr. Mifflin:

I have spent a good part of the day with Miss Mary Johnston, who has more prisoners of hope in her writing desk. She is a shy, wee body, a mere child in appearance, but she has a pair of perfectly splendid eyes and as keen an intelligence as you can find in a month of Sundays. She is very modest — is really surprised at her success. She is a frank little body, incapable of feigning anything. Though somewhat distrustful of herself, she is very much in earnest, and back of her modesty there is a very robust pride in her work.

About all the practical aspects of publishing, she knows nothing, and she seemed very glad to have a chance to ask many questions. Some of them would amuse you. But I haven't met a brighter little woman in a long time.

She is the head of her father's family of several young children, her mother being dead; and her father lost a fortune that he made a dozen years or more ago in building railroads down here. She tells me that she gets only from one to two hours' uninterrupted work a day, and she does her own typewriting. Most of her life was spent in Virginia and in New York. She was at school in New York for five years. . . .

She has another story nearly finished — a story in a general way similar to "Prisoners of Hope." I have three-fourths of the manuscript in my trunk and I am going to read it with reference to use in the *Atlantic* at once.

I'm glad I saw her. She told me that several publishers have written to her. McClure, in particular, seems to be earnestly attacking her. She expressed a loyalty to us —

she is really very appreciative; but her practical ignorance of publishing is so great that I have a feeling that Doubleday or Phillips or Sam McClure could easily have carried away the manuscript that I have if they had taken the trouble to come here. She would not have thought that she had done anything wrong in giving it to any of them. I, therefore, gave her some good doctrine about publishing and publishers' methods; and I think that she is both too shrewd and too fair-minded to forget it. She is a very proud, very shy, very high-strung, but very true little body. (You couldn't possibly guess how little she is and what fine eyes she has.)

I gave her a very cordial invitation to come to see us, and she'll come one of these days. She had thought about it; but she doesn't see how she can leave her housekeeping duties at any early time, etc., etc. — But we got to be good friends before I came away: she has kinspeople who are a sort of Virginia cousins to me; and in these folk in this part of the world, that counts. I discovered that her friends and kinspeople are of course very proud of her success; and some of them, I think, are greatly surprised at it. But she has both the pluck and the temperament for repeating this first success several times, I should say. . . .

The other Southern writer in whom Page early detected great possibilities was Miss Ellen Glasgow. A letter written Miss Glasgow when she was in her early twenties and hardly known, has more than a personal interest; it discloses the seriousness with which Page regarded the literary career; the almost sacred obligation that lay upon the possessor of talent to use the gift only for the finest purposes, and to stand on guard against the commercial forces that constantly tempt one to cheapen it. It is advice that

may well serve as a guide to all novices in writing. It can be published with especial satisfaction because the author to whom it was addressed— whether influenced by this particular letter or not — has made its precepts the directing principles of her career.

To Ellen Glasgow

December 8, 1897.

Dear Miss Glasgow:

. . . I am still in the same mind as when I saw you about your publishing any other work than your important pieces of fiction, at least for the present. I was never more thoroughly convinced of anything than I am of the advisability of trusting everything to your most important and significant books. I suppose that this has been true in all ages of the world, but however true it may or may not have been in previous times, it is certainly true now, because it is an everyday occurrence that authors of promise scatter the influences that ought to go towards the firm and steady building of a great reputation, by appearing in print here, there, and everywhere. Even if all the minor literature that they put forth be excellent of its kind, the public comes after a very little while to regard the author as a sort of "professional" writer who turns up with poems or short stories, or essays and other things so often as to cause one to regard the writer rather as a "literary operative" than as a person who is bent upon doing only great pieces of work. The everlasting clatter about the colour of an author's hair, the kind of stationery he uses, his goings and his comings and his opinions on all sorts of little things, makes many a good reputation commonplace.

Of all this I am very thoroughly convinced; at the same time I know of temporary and trifling advantages which

minor work brings one. But with your seriousness of purpose and your high aim I cannot help believing that it would be a grave mistake for you to do anything except to drive forward with your greater efforts. Of course after a little when you have more firmly established your reputation, you can better afford to amuse yourself with smaller things. The public then, too, will receive them rather as your recreations than as important efforts. But you will be gauged now by the smallest things that you put forth . . .

CHAPTER X

THE PUBLISHER AS CITIZEN

I

WHATEVER may be thought of the nineteenth century," wrote Page, as that epoch in human annals was approaching its end, "whenever it can be seen in the perspective of universal history, to men who have caught the spirit of its closing years, it seems the best time to live that has so far come. It is unlike all former periods in this, that it has seen the simultaneous extension of democracy and the rise of science. These have put life on a new plane, and made a new adjustment of man to man and of man to the universe. An incalculable advantage that we have over men of any other century is the widening of individual opportunity. It has been the century of the abolition of slavery throughout the English-speaking world, and of serfdom in Russia. It has been the century of the spread of well being among the masses; for there are in the United States perhaps fifty millions of persons better fed, better clad, freer from care, and more cheerful masters of gainful crafts than ever before lived contiguously. It is the century of machinery, of swift travel, and of instant communication; and these have brought greater social betterment than had before come within the historic period.

"It has been the century of the expansion of the Republic, and of the earth-girdling spread of the British Empire — the widest domination that has been won by men of the same stock. They are men, too, of one speech, of one literature, and that the greatest; and wherever they have gone they have carried their love of order and of fair

play, their habit of truth-telling, their outdoor sports, and their genius for action.

"Although it has been the century of the widest conquest, it has been the century also of the greatest toleration, of the keenest human sympathy, the most active helpfulness. In an era of action and of freedom, man has become a brother to man as he never became in any era of doctrine and authority. It has been the century of patient fact finding, the century of emancipation of thought from mystery and dogma, and of the yielding of theory to experience. We are more nearly the masters of nature and are more at home in the universe than any of our predecessors — a universe that is better known to us, and for that reason the more wonderful and the more homelike.

"Of American life, as the century ends, the keynote is the note of joyful achievement; and its faith is an evangelical faith in a democracy that broadens as fast as social growth invites. The Republic has been extended, held together, again extended, and is still the harbour of refuge and the beacon of civilization. Its influence has broadened the thought of the Old World, and is now felt in the Oldest World. It is liberalizing kings toward their uncrowning, and softening class distinctions, and it is making all artificial authority obsolete. Its century of action and of social experiment has turned all formal philosophies into curiosities of literature. It has now yielded material for a new period of constructive thought."

The era that was closing, and the one that was opening, were well symbolized by two men for whom Page had a warm admiration — McKinley and Roosevelt. Page regarded protection as an economic delusion and a moral wrong, and the early aspects of President McKinley's career therefore made no especial appeal, but the man's

intelligent growth under Presidential responsibility, the influence he had exerted in improving the tone of American public life, the conscience and ability with which he had piloted the nation through the Spanish War and Philippine annexation inevitably struck a responsive chord. McKinley's successor Page had known for many years. Like Woodrow Wilson, Mr. Roosevelt had been a frequent contributor to the *Forum* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. Page had watched his career as Assemblyman, Police Commissioner, and Governor of New York with the interest which he always felt in the rise of promising men. "He is the best public hero that has come in this generation," he said. When the Governor was drafted into the Vice Presidency, Page predicted that that office "is likely to wake up and to recall the days when men found it a perch instead of a shelf." In all the political causes in which Page so heartily believed, Roosevelt had been a leader, while the man's mental tastes, his love of books, of the country, of outdoor sports, and his spontaneity and vitality would naturally make him a kindred soul. Page looked hopefully forward to Roosevelt's accession as ending the era of rapacious dullness that had followed the Civil War; he found great comfort in the fact that the new President was the son of a Northern father and a Southern mother, that he was only three years old when the war began, and the only President since Andrew Johnson — except Cleveland — who had not fought in that conflict, and that his genius, unlike his predecessors', had a continental expanse — as much at home on a Western ranch or a South Carolina canebrake as in the Yard at Harvard. Page visited Roosevelt soon after his installation and has left a written record which is as vivid as anything we are likely ever to have of the young President just beginning his Washington career:

Every visitor to the White House receives a shock — an invigorating shock of frank earnestness. When you go into the President's reception room, you will see some man who seeks an office for a friend or a follower, and he speaks in a low tone to the President. The President questions or answers him quickly, so that everybody in the room hears what he says: he is an audible, not a whispering, President. Another man approaches him and speaks hesitatingly.

"Tell me what you have to say quickly, quickly," says Mr. Roosevelt.

The story is told of a political visitor who came to seek a postal appointment for a friend. After presenting his case he said: "Mr. President, I have here a number of papers bearing on the subject. I suppose I ought to leave them with the Post Office Department."

"No, let me see them."

Then as the President hastily ran his eye over them he laid aside one that was marked "Petition"; then another; and a third. "Petition," said he, "I could get a petition to have you hanged," and he gave these back to the visitor.

Mr. Roosevelt comes into his audience room alert, earnest, with the air of a man who has something to do. There's a spring in his step. There is candour in his manner and a natural cordiality, but his quickness of motion and of mind gives a new sensation. Begin to make to him the little speech that you had thought out beforehand and you soon see that he is outrunning you. While you are still in your preface he has jumped into the middle of what you mean to say, and he answers you before you have spoken it. During a three minutes' interview he has time to rush you forward with your story, to take in and digest all that you meant to say, to laugh, to look you in the face squarely, to give you an answer, to shake your hand cordially; and

you are gone with your speech undelivered, but he has perfectly understood you and your errand. Before you are done thanking him he smiles and waves recognition to an acquaintance at the other side of the room — swift, earnest, cheerful, no such interviews have been held with any other man that ever gave audience in the White House. As unconventional as Lincoln, as natural as Grant, as earnest as Cleveland, and swifter than any of them by an immeasurable difference, Mr. Roosevelt does graceful but fatal violence to "the Presidential manner."

For there was a Presidential manner, the manner that most men who have held the office naturally acquired by the unnatural experience of spending half their lives in giving audience to political petitioners and to the makers of formal speeches. The great man came in, stood impassively, heard you till you were done, spoke as if by formula and said little; he had a look of cheerful resignation rather than of alert interest. To the infrequent visitor to the White House an audience with most Presidents has been a disappointing experience. The visitor felt as if *he* had done all the talking. He had been graciously received, but he had brought nothing away with him. The memory of an official shake of the hand and of a dignified smile lacked something of the human touch. He had talked with the President, not with the man.

Under this consulship the two are one. You see the President, but you also see Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, with a dignity really the greater and the more impressive because it is not official, but the natural manner of the man. He does not seem weary. He is busy, very busy; earnest, very earnest; but he has the manner of a man who likes his work. You recall the campaign story that was told of him when a sympathetic soul expressed deep regret that he had been obliged to get up from his bed in his car and make his

fourteenth speech of that day's journey and to shake hands with another crowd. "No," said he, "don't feel sorry for me. I like it." The calling of the President's home "The White House" instead of "The Executive Mansion" and the omission, at the reception at Yale University, of the old custom of shaking hands with the whole crowd, are significant evidences of his direct common sense applied to the Presidential office.

Born of a distinguished family, but the most democratic of men by habit of mind and by versatility of action, youthful, physically alert, rapid in thought, earnest and in love with life and work — these characteristics of the President have already made a cheerful impression on the public mind. The moral and mental effect of such a man in the White House is stimulating. The highest public business is done with zest. It has long been efficiently and cleanly done. But a touch of enjoyment is now added to the manner of its doing. When lunch time comes the President takes to his table, when he is free, any friends that happen to be within reach. And the White House is full of children — full of the most robust enjoyment of life, with a deep seriousness underlying it, but with a contagious cheerfulness pervading it.

Such is the man who is President of the whole people and not of one section or of one party only. The effect of an Administration by the straightforward methods of such a man will be greater than can yet be appreciated, for he makes public life far more attractive than it has been for a generation or two. It is a true saying by the London *Spectator* that he is far more like the men of the first three decades of the Republic than the convention-made Presidents of modern times. He is like the early Virginians, too, in his social grace and tact.

The turn of the century brought also a change in Page's fortunes. He was now forty-five years old; his life in Boston was exceedingly happy and his great success with the *Atlantic* was daily enhancing his reputation and enlarging his friendships and his interests. From all outward signs he was firmly settled for the rest of his days. The note of cheerfulness and expectant optimism that marks his farewell to the old century and his welcome to the new was likewise the prevailing note of his own life. Suddenly, however, the serenity of his Park Street existence was disturbed. Letters and telegrams, in rapid succession, fell upon Page's desk — all signed by a name that was then one of the most insistent and triumphant in American publishing. The gentleman who now began to beckon in Page's direction was Mr. Samuel S. McClure. No more original and vibrant figure has ever gained an ascendancy in periodical literature. Born in Ireland, of Scottish and Protestant ancestry, and a partaker, in his childhood, of all the hardships of rural life in that country, Mr. McClure, at the age of nine, had emigrated to the United States, acquired an education in the public schools of Indiana and at Knox College in Illinois, and, moving to New York, had engaged in several literary enterprises, one of the most influential being the establishment of his famous newspaper syndicate. This undertaking had brought Mr. McClure into association with many of the foremost writers of the time, on both sides of the Atlantic. He was probably more responsible than any other man for introducing such authors as Robert Louis Stevenson, Frank R. Stockton, Rudyard Kipling, and Sarah Orne Jewett, to the vast multitude reached by the newspaper press. Exuberant, brilliant, erratic, his mind always bubbling with ideas, there were few men or few causes that did not enlist Mr. McClure's attention. His personal qualities — his

nervous energy, his restless ambition, his gay optimism, his resourcefulness, the unabashed readiness with which he would attack the most perplexing problems, the success with which he would frequently carry them through, as well as his abounding vitality and generosity of spirit — had given Stevenson his character of Jim Pinkerton in "The Wrecker," and, by 1899, had made "S.S." — as Mr. McClure was known to the publishing and writing fraternity — one of the outstanding literary figures in the United States. The success of *McClure's Magazine*, which he had founded amid unparalleled difficulties in the panic of 1893 — a success due entirely to the originality and force of McClure's editorship — had introduced a new era in magazine making. His rise had been practically contemporaneous with that of two other young men, representing the same generation — Walter Page himself, and Frank N. Doubleday. Mr. Doubleday and Mr. McClure had already joined forces, but, in July of 1899, a much greater prospect had opened before them. Naturally enough, Mr. McClure felt a kindred soul in Page. The two men had similar ideas on the scope of the magazine — with both it was more than a mere form of popular entertainment; it was a most useful instrument for recording and interpreting American life and, above all, for improving its tone, in literature, politics and social and industrial activities.

"I have greatly enlarged my borders. I want very much to see you," Mr. McClure telegraphed Page early in June. And a week or two afterward came another message: "Should see you immediately; have biggest thing on earth — several in fact." Then, still not revealing the great secret, he wrote imploring Page for an interview. "I have got the earth," said Mr. McClure, "with several things thrown in, and am eager to see if you don't want one or two kingdoms for yourself. Anyhow, we could have an

interesting conversation. I have got four or five major-generalships to give out and I regard you as the one indispensable man in the world for our enterprises at the present time." "My dear Boy," Mr. McClure wrote, after receiving a favourable response from Page, "Your splendid telegram caused great jubilation in this hot part of the earth. We have now the strongest combine of men in the editorial and publishing fields in the world. I hope that you will go in with John [1] and me into great magazine work for the next few months. But the encyclopædia is a worthy work for you. However, as I said, we are a band of independent brothers and you can pick out your own planets to rule. . . . Oh, my dear boy, *we* are the people with the years in front of us."

The explanation of this somewhat exciting approach was the programme in course of construction by the firm of Doubleday and McClure. A new magazine, dealing with contemporary history, was to be started; and an American encyclopædia was planned — a vast undertaking that would perform the service in the United States that the *Britannica* had for a century fulfilled in Great Britain. Page's coöperation was solicited for both these enterprises, and of the encyclopædia he was invited to become the editor-in-chief. Important as both these undertakings were, there was another one more important still. Only a few men in the publishing field then knew that a great disaster was overhanging the most venerable and presumably most profitable American publishing house. Founded in 1812, Harper and Brothers, through its multitudinous publications and magazines, had become one of the best-known institutions in the United States. Millions of American school children had obtained their education by

[1] Mr. John S. Phillips, co-editor of *McClure's Magazine* and partner in Mr. McClure's enterprises.

the aid of textbooks issued by this house; the older generation had met many of the greatest contemporary authors through the same medium, just as they had followed the battles of the Civil War, the corruptions of the Tammany Ring and other historic proceedings in the pages of *Harper's Weekly*, or read the finest productions of American and English writers in *Harper's Magazine*. The sturdy appearance of its iron-front building on Franklin Square, the atmosphere of murky conservatism that enshrouded its offices, the dignity of its literary staff, with the scholarly Mr. Henry M. Alden at the head, suggested respectability, permanence, and, above all, financial strength. Yet the fact was that for several years preceding 1900 the firm of Harper and Brothers had been hovering on the brink of ruin, and had avoided bankruptcy only by the assistance of the banking house of J. P. Morgan. "The fall of Harper and Brothers would be a national calamity," Mr. Morgan had said, and for a considerable time he had been attempting, with large loans, to put the establishment on its feet. The trouble was the one that has afflicted so many great business houses — the inbreeding that had been going on for three generations, the habit of attaching to the firm a large number of family retainers at inflated salaries. By the summer of 1899, Mr. Morgan's debt had reached such proportions that he had become alarmed. Clearly, something radical must be done. The existing Harper organization could never rescue the firm; some new brains must come in — and come in quickly. Mr. Morgan had always one favourite recourse for an embarrassing problem of this kind: he was a strong believer in young men. Who were the most promising young publishers in New York, he asked — the men who, though already launched, still had their futures ahead of them, who had the skill and the ambition to work hard for such a dazzling

reward as the eventual ownership of a property like that of Harper and Brothers? The report upon this question unanimously pointed to Mr. Doubleday and Mr. McClure. The task ahead of Messrs. Doubleday and McClure was too great for their unassisted efforts, and hence Mr. McClure's appealing telegrams to Page. At the same time another young man, who has since made a name in education and journalism, was invited to join the combination; this was Dr. John H. Finley, in 1899 (in his twenty-ninth year), President of Knox College.

The prospect of becoming the Diderot of a great American Encyclopædia and, at the same time, a partner in the House of Harper, with an immediate income that exceeded threefold the one he was receiving in Boston, was the temptation that now lured Page from his pleasant associations in New England. From youth it had been Page's ambition to have a business of his own, to edit magazines in which he possessed at least a joint proprietorship: and this opportunity had now come. The last glimpse of Page in the *Atlantic* office is furnished by Mr. Bliss Perry, his successor as editor. "I recall vividly my meeting with Page in July, 1899, after he had resigned the editorship of the *Atlantic*. I had been in the woods on a fishing trip, and when I came out I found Mr. Jenkins, of the *Atlantic*, waiting in the little Vermont village where I was spending the summer, with an invitation to me to become editor of the *Atlantic*. I was then a professor at Princeton and had never had the slightest thought of magazine or journalistic work. The proposal, however, was in many ways attractive, and I went down to Boston at once with Mr. Jenkins in order to talk the matter over with Mr. Mifflin, the head of the firm that then owned the magazine. Page had already accepted the post with the Harper combination and was in a hurry to wind up his duties in Boston. When I ap-

peared in his office, he was reading proof. I shall never forget his first words. He threw up his hand in sign of cordial welcome and then remarked with a gesture toward the proof on his desk: 'Perry, there isn't a man on the island of Manhattan from the Battery to the Bronx who can write the English language worth a damn!' This was a somewhat disheartening remark to make to a potential editor, but Page's caustic humour was irresistibly inviting. He took up another galley of proof. 'There,' said he, 'is some stuff that you will have to go over. It is by old X,' and he named a most distinguished New England man of letters whose grace of style had won deserved approbation from everybody. 'Old X is doddering,' Page continued, 'but I don't think you'll be bothered with him much longer.' I may add that this last clause was a poor bit of prophecy.

"I then sat down with Page and told him about my uncertainty as to accepting the editorship. He asked me about the Princeton professorship, and I told him that I was entirely happy there, and that my work suited me exactly. 'Well,' said Page, 'you remind me of a North Carolina story. A fellow down there had a sawmill which he was anxious to sell, and he offered it for five thousand dollars. By and by a purchaser appeared who had that amount of available cash. 'I'll sell if you want me to,' said the owner, 'but I don't see what in hell anybody with five thousand dollars should want of a sawmill.' I saw the point of this story rather often during the next ten years, even though I did not fully appreciate it at the time." [1]

[1] Personal communication to the author.

To Horace E. Scudder

Hotel Margaret, Brooklyn, N.Y.
4 November, 1899.

My dear Mr. Scudder:

I write you a note on this sheet of paper to inform you where a bed and a welcome await you whenever you will be good enough to put them to the test. After wearing ourselves out looking for the impossible — a house in town that we would have and could afford — Mrs. Page and I took winter quarters here, high on the hill overlooking the bay and the city across the river, because with our abbreviated family she can rest from housekeeping till we go to the country when the leaves begin to turn green, and because I can go to Franklin Square in fifteen minutes and come home to luncheon. It is all as good as can be for a man who never loved the town and never can or will; and it is all very well for me during these six or seven months when I wish to be much at Franklin Square. But thereafter anybody that comes to see us must come to the country.

We have decided that we are very happy in many ways. I enjoy the new freedom that I have found — freedom from having to read millions of poems and stories and to make up magazine schedules and the freedom to go about and try to find out what people are writing. I almost persuaded myself that I was quite happy last night when I came home from ten days' absence and my game-bag filled with the promise of thirteen books for the next spring and fall lists. That's fun compared with office work. All this I tell you because it's hard to get weaned from Cambridge and 4 Park Street — hard till I recall that 4 Park Street meant eight hours' office work a day and the consequent rheumatism of knee and brain; for I am as well now as I heartily hope you are, too.

We have been hindered from becoming what housekeepers call "fully settled" even yet by my frequent absences and especially by a long interruption caused by my father's illness and death since I came here. What we have been fearing for several years came at last — leaving me lonelier than I ever felt before; for it has somehow pushed me forward from the almost youthful attitude that I had continued to assume that I held in the family. It is a severe shock to find that of a large group I am suddenly become the senior.

But the bed and the welcome await you; and I pray you let me know and let us see you when you come to New York.

The six months' tenancy of the Harper concern by Doubleday, McClure, Page, and Finley is one of the picturesque literary traditions of New York. The episode was not lacking in its humorous phases. The group suddenly appeared in the Harper office, greatly to the astonishment of the ancient retainers, practically none of whom had had the slightest intimation of their coming, or had, indeed, any suspicion that the Harper firm was facing ruin. Naturally these old-timers, who had spent a lifetime industriously editing magazines and selecting manuscripts for the greatest American publishing house, looked with uneasy distrust upon these bustling newcomers; the knowledge, however, that Mr. J. P. Morgan had installed them, with full sovereignty over the business, left the Harper cohorts helpless. Yet the men "from uptown," as they were called, had not accepted the Morgan invitation in full. Their sojourn was really a voyage of investigation. Before irrevocably aligning their future with Franklin Square they were to try the experiment for six months and to make a minute study of conditions. Long before the

probation ended, they had decided the question adversely. The assets of the property were valuable, but the debt presented an insuperable difficulty. Had this group of young men taken upon themselves the Harper burden, they would simply have spent their most productive years in paying off the Morgan obligation, and they were worldly-wise enough to think that they would prefer to devote their energies to building a business of their own. The Doubleday-McClure-Page-Finley combination, therefore, disappeared from the Harper office as suddenly as it had come. One morning, soon after the renunciation, the Harper staff, walking up the iron steps to the entrance, found a notice on the door, informing them that the bankruptcy court had taken control of the company. Even the vicissitudes of the previous year had been no sufficient preparation for such a shock. Happily, however, this was not the end of the venerable house. There were many years of trial ahead, but skilful management has piloted Harper and Brothers through the period of reorganization, until, in recent times, it has regained its prestige as one of the most successful and most high-minded of American publishing houses.

The experiment, however, had important consequences for all four members of the Doubleday group. Mr. Woodrow Wilson, then on the verge of the Presidency of Princeton, procured an invitation for Mr. Finley to become professor of the newly established chair of Politics at that University. Mr. Doubleday and Mr. McClure dissolved partnership — each organizing a new firm. Mr. Doubleday had already gathered around him a number of young men, the most important of whom were Mr. Samuel A. Everitt, a recent Yale graduate, who, like Mr. Doubleday himself, had served an apprenticeship with Charles Scribner's Sons, and Mr. Henry W. Lanier, a son of the poet Sidney Lanier,

and an accomplished worker in both the literary and artistic fields of publishing. Walter Page joined forces with this group, and the new publishing house of Doubleday, Page and Company started business in January, 1900. The mere fact that it began its career as the American publisher of the works of Rudyard Kipling — already a close personal friend of Mr. Doubleday — at once gave it an excellent standing. Its first quarters were humble enough — a floor of an old building facing Union Square — from which Page could see, a few hundred feet away, the old *Forum* office, the scene of his early success, which he had left five years before.

II

The rapid prosperity of this new publishing house is one of the great episodes in the modern history of the trade. As always, Page regarded his occupation as important chiefly in its public aspects. Since leaving Johns Hopkins the mere matter of earning a living had always been secondary to the really absorbing task of advancing the causes that had filled his mind since boyhood. A job, whether it was the editorship of a country newspaper or a national magazine, or a partnership in a young and successful publishing firm, inevitably became, in Page's hands, an instrument for promoting the social democracy, for advancing primary education, technical training, scientific agriculture, the improvement of country life, sanitation, and for emphasizing in the growing mind the dignity of American citizenship. And now these purposes assumed an even greater importance. "You see," he wrote his friend, Professor Edwin Mims, "I am always feeling my way toward the utilization of this vast unused material and I wish to make the publishing machinery which centres here do all the good it possibly can in my lifetime for the old country."

"My wish and aim," he wrote at another time, and this forms a fair summation of his publisher's creed, "is to become a helpful partner of some of the men and women of my generation who can, by their writings, lay the great democracy that we all serve under obligations to them for a new impulse. By serving them, I, too, serve my country and my time. And when I say that this is my aim and wish, I could say with equal truth that it is the aim and wish of every other real publisher. Of downright quacks in the publishing world, there are not many. But there are incompetents a-plenty and a fair share of adventurers. We shall both — authors and publishers — get the proper cue if we regard the swarming eager democracy all about us as a mass of constantly rising men and women, ambitious to grow, with the same higher impulses that we feel in our best moods; and if we interpret our duty as the high privilege of ministering to these higher impulses and not to their lower senses, without commercialism on one side and without academicism on the other, men among men, worthy among the worthy, we may make our calling under such a conception a calling that leads. . . .

"As nearly as I can make out the publishing houses in the United States that are conducted as dignified institutions are conducted with as little degrading commercialism as the old houses whose history has become a part of English literature, and I believe that they are conducted with more ability. Certainly not one of them has made a colossal fortune. Certainly not one of them ever failed to recognize or to encourage a high literary purpose if it were sanely directed. Every one of them every year invests in books and authors that they know cannot yield a direct or immediate profit, and they make these investments because they feel ennobled by trying to do a service to literature. The great difficulty is to recognize literature when it first

comes in at the door, for one quality of literature is that it is not likely even to know itself. The one thing that is certain is that the critical crew and the academic faculty are sure not to recognize it at first sight. To know its royal qualities at once under strange and new garments — that is to be a great publisher, and the glory of that achievement is as great as it ever was."

In what way could a publisher best promote good citizenship? One effective way in which he could serve his country was by doing his part toward improving the public taste and by increasing the circulation, among the people, of the great masterpieces of literature. A few letters to Alphonso Smith show how this question was ever present in Page's mind.

To C. Alphonso Smith

Englewood, N.J.
18 April, 1908.

My dear Smith:

. . . There is a continuous demand by intelligent persons in our ambitious democracy for books which shall really help towards cultivation in literature, in taste, in appreciation. I mean persons whose formal literary training was meagre or was neglected, as most women's training has been. But these readers are not the only ones who want what may be called self-culture books. They play an important part also in the lives of men and women whose training was not neglected.

Such books on literary subjects — on taste, style, temperament, reading, etc., etc. — are exceedingly few; for they are hard to write. Your mere scholar makes a too formal text book, whether he means to or not. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred who set out to write "for the general

public" write "down" to them — write mere kindergarten platitudes, under the impression that they are writing for children or dunces, whereas the task is to write for as capable an audience as there is in the world. Yet it is an audience that will not go to the trouble now to get at results by the text-book method.

It is really the teaching of intelligent adults. Yet it is not an easy Chautauqua-sort of shortcut to learning or culture.

Such books can be written only by a man who knows, who can write well, and who is sincere.

All this is vague. It must be vague till we come to the place where a definite table of contents might be planned for some particular volume; and I do not mean now to try to go so far.

Let me hear what you think of it.

To C. Alphonso Smith

New York City,
June 2, 1908.

My dear Smith:

. . . Books of criticism, of course, have a very small audience because their appeal is made wholly to persons who have themselves intelligently and carefully read the authors that are criticized. Almost the same thing can be said about books on the history of literature or of any section of literature. By this process of elimination we publishers have found out that critical books and books of a historical nature about literature butter very small loaves of bread.

On the other hand, the great audience for books about literature in the United States consists of persons who have not had rigid or thorough or very extensive training

in literature, and who have read, some a few, others a good many, good authors, and who would like to know not so much facts about definite authors (which can be found in hundreds of literary histories and the like) but they would like to know how to go about making their culture higher and finer. They would like to know the spirit with which they must approach literary studies and reading; they would like to know how they are to find the time to do such a thing and how they can utilize such time as they have to the best advantage; they would like to know the experiences of other people of similar ambitions.

Then there is a still larger class which is less well informed, and the people of this class would like to know how they can go about getting a right view of literature and what such a right view would bring them — what mellowness of spirit, what new views of life.

In other words, a book such as I have in mind can be written well and satisfactorily only by a scholar, but the man who writes it must keep entirely out of his mind a scholarly audience. Of course, there is no such thing as successfully "writing down" to anybody of intelligence. The thing to do is to write in the simplest most direct way possible to an audience that is not trained but that is exceedingly intelligent, and, I believe, is more appreciative than a more highly trained audience. There is room and need for all a man's scholarship, for all a man's sympathy and fellowship and human helpfulness — but there can be no technical scholarship or professionalism in it. It must be man talking to man about the most interesting and intimate of all subjects, to wit, how to improve the mind and to lift the spirit and to mellow the nature by communion with great literature.

You will pardon me for writing you all this, won't you? But in writing you this I am simply thinking aloud and

trying in some fashion to formulate the scheme for my own satisfaction as well as for your help (if I can be of help).

To C. Alphonso Smith

New York City
Sunday, April 9, 1911.

My dear Smith:

. . . I should now, while expressing my confidence in the scheme that you have in hand, like to present to you the whole big problem of furthering literature in our democracy, as it lies in my mind and in my hopes; for I do wish to find a way whereby our machinery may do notable and serviceable work in this way — may build a great reputation and do a great thing — a thing to be proud of.

As I was telling you the other night, I can't get away from the problem of getting good literature into the hands and the homes of the masses. The job has been done over and over again, from the old Bohn Library to the excellent Everyman's Library [1] now active in the market. For thirty-five cents a volume you can buy almost any piece of great old literature in Everyman's Library. It is a success — not as great a success, however, in the American markets as it was expected to be and as it ought to be. For it would be hard to improve on those books. But the trouble lies in the difficulties of distribution. The bookstores do not reach enough of the masses of the people.

You know that W. T. Stead some years ago published in England nearly all the old English poets in what was practically a good newspaper form — at a penny a sheet (or volume); and the circulation of them was enormous. The plan showed that the mass of common people really did

[1] An enterprise of the London firm of J. M. Dent and Company, issued in the United States by E. P. Dutton and Company.

want the poets. I doubt if there was any profit in this scheme; but it revealed suggestive possibilities.

At this very hour the Nelson press in Edinburgh, I understand, is running off twenty-five thousand volumes a day of cheap good books. In our own country, we have had many plans — some successful. The Houghton Mifflin Company Riverside Literature Series has reached many millions of copies; but they have been used chiefly in schools. So, too, with the Macmillan 25-cent series. They are school books. Of course if these publishers could find a way to get these series into universal circulation they would do it. As I told you, the difficulty is of distribution. I don't know how it is going to be overcome. But I can't stop thinking of it.

And I want you to think of it. Won't you get a copy of the Riverside Series, of the Macmillan 25-cent series, and of all other such series that you know (I imagine they are all within easy reach of you) and look them over and see if they suggest anything to you? I send you a copy of a Sunday-supplement novel issued by one of the New York papers. That is the extreme of cheapness; and yet it is exceedingly legible.

There are big ideas ahead of what you are doing. They may not take the shape of cheap books such as my mind keeps running on; but you may find a better way. Put this problem before you: What machinery could you use to instruct the whole American people in Literature?

And (it isn't far up here) get on the train some Thursday or Friday (with Mrs. Smith) and spend a week-end with me at my house in Garden City.

And always Page's mind was occupied with thoughts of how he could use his publishing house for the benefit of his own South.

To Edwin Mims

New York City,
December 27, 1907.

My dear Mims:

I send you my heartiest holiday greeting, my good wishes for the New Year, and my heartiest sympathy with all the things that you stand for.

And while I am writing may I tell you of one hope and ambition that I set great value on and I shall be very happy if during the coming year I can in some appreciable way further it? I wish to get reduced to some specific shape, if it be possible and if the time be ripe, both magazine matter and books — especially books — which shall be written with such fervour and at such an angle to life as will hasten the broadening of Southern development. While we carry on our trade of putting forth periodical and book literature, of course I am not content simply to publish books and publish magazines with this, that, and the other routine thing in them, however good this routine may be; for I regard all this machinery simply as so many tools to be used for furthering great purposes. Of course, one of the very great purposes that men of our time can have is just this — the broadening of Southern development, and I wish that I knew enough and could find out enough to reduce this large purpose to some good concrete terms during the coming year.

Can't you help me? If you can think of any treatment of Southern subjects, especially of any subjects for books and effective writers that would give the old land a lift, won't you let me know?

How seriously Page regarded his occupation was made plain in his brochure, "A Publisher's Confession," which

he wrote in 1905. This contains his reasoned creed upon his trade. The little volume appeared originally as a series of articles in the *Boston Transcript*; they were published anonymously, and aroused wide interest and much speculation as to the author. They kindled the ire of George Bernard Shaw, who denounced them as "the Confessions of a thundering liar." "Mr. Shaw," said Page, "assailed the book as though it were one of the conventional moralities."

The beginning and the end of Page's philosophy rested upon the relationship which he sought to establish between those historic enemies — the publisher and the author. He insisted — and it was a faith which he sedulously practiced, though this viewpoint in itself would have been enough to stir Mr. Shaw to anger — that this relationship was more than a commercial one. "The writers of good books," he said, "are among the greatest benefactors of society; and the publishers of good books, if publishing be worthily regarded and properly done, is a necessary and complementary service. The publisher is the partner, the helper of the author, and his high servant or minister to the people. It is work worthy of large men and of high-minded men. Honest men we are — those of us who conduct the publishing houses that are in good repute. But I sometimes think that we miss being large men; for we do not do our business in (shall I say?) a statesmanlike way. We imitate the manners of tradesmen. We speak in the vocabulary of tradesmen. We are too likely to look at small projects as important — to pay our heed to the mere tricks of our trade — and to treat large enterprises, if we have them, as if they were but a part of the routine. A good book is a Big Thing, a thing to be thankful to heaven for. It is a great day for any of us when we can put our imprint on it. Here is a chance for rever-

ence, for something like consecration. And the man or the woman who can write a good book is a form of capital infinitely more attractive than a large bank account or a great publishing 'plant.' Yet, if we regard an author simply as 'capital,' we are not worthy to serve him. The relation leads naturally to a friendly and helpful attitude. We know something about books, about the book market, about the public, that no author is likely to know. With this knowledge we can serve those that write. And with our knowledge of the author and of his work, we can serve the public. It is our habit to keep our accounts with authors accurately, to pay them promptly, to receive them courteously when they call, to answer their letters politely and sometimes to bore them with formal dinners at our clubs, before they sail for Europe. But how many of us really know the intellectual life of any author whose books we print, and supply a stimulus to his best plans? . . .

"Every great publishing house has been built on the strong friendships between writers and publishers. There is, in fact, no other sound basis to build on; for the publisher cannot do his highest duty to any author whose work he does not appreciate, and with whom he is not in sympathy. Now, when a man has an appreciation of your work, and sympathy for it, he wins you. This is the simplest of all psychological laws — the simplest of all laws of friendship and one of the soundest. Those who know the personal history of the publishing houses that in recent years have failed or met embarrassments know that, in most cases, one cause of decline was the drawing apart of publishers and authors. When authors begin to regard their publishers as mere business agents, and publishers to regard authors as mere 'literary men' with whom they have only business relations, the beginning of a decline has come. . . .

"Every publisher's experience is the same — if he be a real publisher and will long remain a real publisher. Else he would be only a printer and a salesman, and mere printers and salesmen have not often built publishing houses. For publishing houses have this distinction over most other commercial institutions — they rest on the friendship of the most interesting persons in the world, the writers of good books.

"The more formal cultivation of friendly relations such as the famous dinners that some publishers used regularly to give to writers has gone out of fashion. There are yet a few set dinners in the routine of several American publishing houses. But every true publisher knows the authors of his books — knows them as his friends; and the tradition of irritability is false. It is usually the unsuccessful who are irritable, whether they be authors or not . . . This rule will hold true — that no publishing house can win and keep a place on the highest level that does not have at least one man who possesses this true publishing personality."

Page liked to tell the story of a woman whose latest book he wished very much to publish — it was the kind he was proud to have on his list.

"You may publish it," this writer said, "if you heartily believe in the book."

"Very shrewdly said — that 'heartily believe in the book,'" Page commented. "For the secret of good publishing lies there. There are some books that a publisher may succeed with without believing in them — a dictionary or a slapdash novel, for examples. But a book that has any sterling quality — a real book — ought never to have the imprint of a publisher who is not really a sharer of its fortunes, a true partner with the author. For only with such a book can he do his best."

The fact that many modern authors, especially authors of popular novels, failed to regard the relationship in this light, explained, Page believed, the growing tendency to "commercialize" the literary output. As a conscientious upholder of his trade, Page refused to place all the blame upon the publisher. Not that he was sparing in his judgment of the less reputable members of the craft. The "raiding" of publishers' lists — the practice, that is, of attempting to entice from other houses the authors of successful books — Page regarded as perhaps the greatest of modern evils. The publisher who did this was a mere manufacturer or tradesman — whereas Page liked to regard his occupation in the light of a profession or art. "It was once a matter of honour that one publisher should respect the relation established between another publisher and a writer, as a physician respects the relation established between another physician and a patient. Three or four of the best publishing houses still live and work by this code. And they have the respect of all the book world. Authors and readers, who do not know definitely why they hold them in esteem, discern a high sense of honour and conduct in them. Character makes its way from any man who has it down a long line — everybody who touches a sterling character comes at last to feel it both in conduct and in product. The very best traditions of publishing are yet a part of the practice of the best American publishing houses, which are conducted by men of real character."

But this "raiding publisher" had his menacing counterpart in the author who hawked his wares — who, flushed with an initial success, peddled his book from one publishing house to another, finally disposing of himself to the highest bidder. The person whom he most injured, Page insisted, was himself, though he did the whole fraternity great harm. "Here is a true tale," he said, "of a writer

of good fiction. He made a most promising start. His first book, in fact, caused him to be sought by several publishers who do not hesitate to solicit clients — a practice that other dignified professions discourage. The publisher of his first book gave him a ten per cent royalty. For his second book he demanded more. A rival publisher offered him twenty per cent. The second book also succeeded. But the author in the meantime had heard the noise of other publishing houses. He had made the acquaintance of another writer whose books (which were better than his) had sold in much greater quantities. Of course, the difference in sales could not be accounted for by the literary qualities of the books; his friend had a better publisher than he — so he concluded. His third book, therefore, was placed with a third publisher, because he would advertise more loudly. His failure, by the way, the report of the receivers showed, was caused by spending too much in unproductive advertising.

"Here our author stood, then, with three books, each issued by a different publishing house. What should he do with his fourth book? He came back to his second publisher, who had, naturally, lost some of his enthusiasm for such an author. To cut the story short, that man now has books on five publishers' lists. Not one of the publishers counts him as his particular client. In a sense his books are all neglected. One has never helped another. He has got no cumulative result of his work. He has become a sort of stray dog in the publishing world. He has cordial relations with no publisher; and his literary product has really declined. He scattered his influence and he is paying the natural penalty."

"There are several things of greater importance in the long run to an author," said Page, summing up the matter, "than a large royalty. One of them is the unstinted loyalty

of his publisher. His publisher must have a chance to be generous to his book. He ought not to feel that he must seek a cheap printer, that he must buy cheap paper, that he must make a cheap cover, that he must too closely watch his advertising account. A publisher has no chance to be generous to a book when he can make a profit on it only at the expense of its proper manufacture. The grasping author is, therefore, doing damage to his own book by leaving the publisher no margin of profit." The wise author selected a publisher in whom he had confidence, and remained with him. "Having found such a man give him your book and leave him to work out the details of publishing. He will be proud to serve you. You will discover, as your acquaintance ripens, that he has your whole career as a writer in his mind and plans. He will shape his whole publishing activities to your development and to the development of other writers like you. Then — if you are capable of writing great books, you will discover that you have set only natural forces at work for your growth and for your publisher's growth; and the little artificial tricks of the trade whereby a flashy story has a 'run' — into swift oblivion — will pass from your mind and from his. You will both be doing your best work."

III

The fourteen years — from 1899 to 1913 — that Page spent as a publisher, gave opportunity for many activities of a public kind. The most important was his work for education, especially education in the South, which will be described presently. Another interest, almost as strong, was his belief in the humanizing quality of country life. Page was one of those philosophers who watched with much anxiety the development of the cities at the expense of the rural sections. The great advantage

of modern America was the vast expanse of farming country owned, not by a rent-paying peasantry, but by millions of upstanding proprietors. Herein, Page insisted, lay the security of his country. "If you wish to find men," he wrote in one of those memoranda which are so numerous among his papers, "or to control men, or to develop men, lead them to the ownership of land. The chance to get land draws them as if there were magic in ownership. After using this magic for a time, you will not think of finding men or of managing men or of developing men in any other way; and you will find out that the wish to own land is a wish in every man's heart and especially in every woman's heart. Even if it be concealed and denied, it is there. You will even come to interpret human history by the ways in which men were helped to own land or by the ways in which they were hindered from owning it; and your reading of the annals of world history by such a rule will not lead you far wrong. For land-hunger has ever shown itself since difficulties were put in the way of men's getting land. 'Land, land, a bit of the earth for myself' — that is what you hear men and women crying in all countries. And all sorts of men and women cry it in all languages. This is the speech of their struggles for individual freedom. This is the hope — the hope to own soil — that comes out at last whenever a hard struggle to live finds a free voice. Even the struggler who has for years been dumb for lack of time to speak his wish will wake up if you show him a way to get land of his own. The memory of a green field will throw a light across years of exile and awaken a forgotten longing. The odour of upturned earth will pierce the heart with a keen joy. 'Land, land' — every man says it when he comes to himself. The touch of the foot to the earth, a fresh morning moving over blooming fields, a cool evening when the moonlight

casts the shadows of trees — nobody escapes a longing for these."

To Henry Wallace

Garden City, N.Y.
October 18, 1912.

Dear Uncle Henry:

I have just got home after a leisurely journey and had time to clear up my desk and somewhat, too, to clear up my mind. As I look back at the two pleasant days I spent with you at Des Moines, they stand out big. If I were to try ever so hard I should never be able to forget your pleasant household, your vigorous sons and daughters, and all that group of the third generation. I am not sure but you are the richest man I know. For what constitutes riches is possessions that are worth bragging about. The way now seems shorter out to the middle of Iowa, and if you don't do something to keep me away I imagine that I shall be travelling in that direction once in a while, just to get a glimpse of our great country, and that cheerful capital of it in which you live. I have not yet brought myself to believe that all of the corn that I saw between Chicago and Kansas City is real corn. It duplicated itself in my amazed imagination; every acre became ten acres; every ten acres became a thousand. Under this sort of hallucination I thought I saw corn to the ends of the earth. After I left you, I saw, likewise, some of the results of it. If anybody had asked me if I had ever seen beef cattle and draft horses, I should, of course, have said "Yes"; but I should have fooled myself. I spent an afternoon at the great cattle show in Kansas City, to which my friends were kind enough to take me, and upon my soul I am never going to be happy until I have a few of those round, fat,

black-backed, wavy-haired steers. People in this part of the effete world — that is, some people — make pets of little dogs and one thing or another. I am going to have me a fine steer as a pet. If my boys down South ever solve the problem of making grass grow there (which they will do one of these days) I am going to cover the whole landscape with that kind of cattle.

My little old speech at Kansas City went off in pretty fair shape. I used you as an example of wisdom and told men to quit strenuous work after they had passed the period of establishing a business and of establishing a family. Two or three fellows who have just got over the line of sixty or sixty-five came up to me afterwards and swore that they were going to lay down their routine work the next day. Of course, I knew every one of them was fooling himself; nevertheless I accepted their promises as a sort of tribute to my eloquence. All this means not that the speech was worth much, but that I had a good time with a lot of mighty good chaps who seem to know what they are doing, too.

Mr. Henry Wallace, to whom this letter was written, was a philosophic agriculturist, the editor of *Wallace's Farmer*, and an insistent champion of rural life. In his later period Page and "Uncle Henry" grew to be good friends and correspondents. Their most intimate association came in 1909 when President Roosevelt appointed both men to his Country Life Commission. This commission was created to study rural life, to find out the things that were retarding its development, and to suggest changes for organizing it in ways to promote the farmers' contentment and prosperity. It travelled over a larger part of the United States, observing conditions at first hand, yet the great contribution the Country Life

Commission made to the cause was along entirely unforeseen lines. Page did not make the Commission's Western and Pacific tour, but he was an eager associate in the trip through the Southern States. One of those events, minor in themselves, which sometimes start great social and economic movements, took place at a little country railroad station between Goldsboro and Raleigh, North Carolina. One morning, at daybreak, Page, Mr. Wallace, and Dr. Charles W. Stiles, the Sanitarian of the Commission, were talking and puffing at their cigars in the smoking compartment of their Pullman. At a certain country station, where the train stopped, a cadaverous, anæmic creature was standing on the platform. His listless and degenerated appearance at once interested Mr. Wallace — the "Uncle Henry" of the above letter. Upon the rich Iowa farms with which he was most familiar, with their robust and corn-fed population, Mr. Wallace had never seen any human being resembling this one. He pointed the man out to Page and asked what was the matter with him.

"That's what is known in the South as a 'dirt-eater,'" said Page. "He is a typical example, though an extreme one, of our poor tenant whites."

"Is that what is called the poor white trash?" asked "Uncle Henry."

"Yes," replied Page, "though it is better not to use that expression south of the Potomac."

At this point Dr. Stiles broke in. The man before them, he said, was merely a rather bad example of hookworm disease. This particular case, he added, was undoubtedly one of long standing.

Page had heard of the hookworm, but had never had the subject presented to him so personally.

"Can that man be cured?" he asked.

"About fifty cents worth of drugs," answered Dr. Stiles, "will completely cure him."

It was from this conversation that Page's interest in hookworm rose. He entered upon a long discussion with Dr. Stiles, and learned, for the first time, of the ravages this enervating complaint was making in his native South. At that moment, said Dr. Stiles, not less than two million men, women, and children in the Southern States were leading miserable and useless lives. Hookworm, too, like most problems of the South, was one of the penalties of slavery, for the negro had brought the destructive parasite from Africa. A few hours afterward the Country Life Commission was holding its session at Raleigh. In the course of the proceedings, the chairman, mindful of the morning's conversation, asked a physician who was testifying whether there was much hookworm in North Carolina.

"I have never seen a case here," said the gentleman of science, quick to defend his State from such a reproach.

Dr. Stiles then rose.

"There are four well-marked cases of hookworm in this room at the present moment," he said.

This remark caused a sensation. The discussion that followed, not only in Raleigh, but throughout the whole South, at first took an unfortunate turn. Certain elements in North Carolina fiercely resented the imputation that such a disease could be widespread in the State. The men chiefly occupied in spreading the news — Page and Dr. Stiles, both of whom were North Carolinians — were "slandering" their native region. The day following the hearing, Governor Glenn severely criticised the Commission for introducing the subject.

However, these spokesmen of the Old South did not represent the sanity of the State. The North Carolina Board of Health issued a public pronouncement, declar-

ing that Dr. Stiles had underestimated its ravages. As a result of the discussion, the Hookworm Commission was formed, with money provided by Mr. John D. Rockefeller. Its work in eliminating the disease, not only in the South, but in other countries — in the West Indies, Egypt, India, China — is one of the greatest chapters in the story of modern sanitation. It led to the formation of the International Health Board, now an active promoter of civilization in all parts of the world. Page was the man chiefly responsible for launching this reform, next to Dr. Stiles: it is one of his greatest claims to public gratitude.

In another one of his memoranda Page expressed his emotions on the beginning of this work.

New York,
October 26, 1909.

The Rockefeller Commission
for the Extermination of
the Hookworm Disease.

To-day this organization was made, with the gift of a million dollars by John D. Rockefeller. The Board is Dr. Charles W. Stiles, the discoverer of the disease in the Southern States, Dr. William H. Welch, the head of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, Dr. Simon Flexner, head of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Frederick T. Gates, Starr J. Murphy and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., of Mr. Rockefeller's "personal staff"; Edwin A. Alderman, President of the University of Virginia; David F. Houston, Chancellor of Washington University, St. Louis; Dr. H. B. Frissell, Principal of Hampton Institute; Walter H. Page; James Y. Joyner, State Superintendent of Schools of North Carolina; P. P. Claxton, of the University of Tennessee.

The one greatest single cause of anæmia and stag-

nation in the South will by this fund be ultimately removed, and 2,000,000 inefficient people be made well.

This result came about from the work of the Country Life Commission appointed by President Roosevelt, and from my bringing Dr. Stiles within the range of Dr. Buttrick's and Mr. Gates's knowledge and interest.

It is the largest single benefit that could be done to the people of the South. This is one of the inheritances of slavery, the disease having been brought by negroes.

A very big day's work indeed.

The sad, sad, sad old land! Last year when I asked Dr. Stiles to explain this plague at Raleigh, the *News and Observer* and Governor Glenn abused me roundly for slandering "the dear old State" — for slandering the land of my birth! And the *News and Observer* published sketches of my father and my grandfather to show how they lived long. *Ergo* the country is perfectly healthful and I was a slanderer! Poor old land!

Houston[1] said to-night — after dining with me — that most of the country in the lowland South is unfit for white residence. Eh? Yes, now. But sanitation and irrigation and the conservation of water — these things, when they come, may change it.

A big day's work for the old land!

IV

Page's personal memoranda during this period give many glimpses of his busy life as well as many illuminating domestic touches. He never systematically kept diaries, but he liked to write his impressions of persons and things, his opinions of books and public movements, his plans for work — all of which, disjointed and hurried as they are,

[1] David F. Houston, subsequently Secretary of Agriculture and of the Treasury in President Wilson's Cabinet.

help to piece together a portrait of the man. From these memoranda and letters the following selections are made:

Teaneck Road, Englewood, N.J.
Saturday night, March 31, 1906.

I begin this book with this night's pleasing picture. It is Saturday. Brownie [1] had to-day her match game of basketball — the day school team of Miss Creighton's School against the boarding pupils' team; and her side was beaten! But the glow of the contest is here, and it enlivened all the dinner talk; and after dinner she played beautifully on the piano. "You give me much pleasure, my dear," I said when she kissed me good night. "It is a pleasure to give you pleasure, dear Daddy."

Her music in the hall does help me write an address — for instance to the students of Richmond College, Va., where I am to make a plea for the professional teaching of writing. I'll bring that plan about, too, in some of our universities.

And Frank and his young friend, Evans, from California, who is spending his Easter vacation here from Milton Academy, are in New York at a theatre; they are nineteen! The theatre is just now their idea of fun — to be home at 1 A.M. But they are robust, normal boys.

April 30, 1907. At a recent dinner given by the *New York Times* to Mr. Moberly Bell, the manager of the London *Times*, there were a number of New York bankers, and much of the Wall Street atmosphere was in the dining room. There was, therefore, much harsh criticism of President Roosevelt.

May 1, 1907. It was a fine picture of Kipling that

[1] The family name for Page's daughter, Katharine A. Page.

Doubleday brought back in his talk — he returned from England to-day — how Kipling and "Carrie" were very, very nice; how he arranged that we should bring out this Fall a complete one-volume edition of his poems, and later a complete set of his books; how he is at work now on more Puck of Pook's Hill stories, one of which he wishes to make about Virginia — in the Colonial days; and how when they parted Kipling put his arm about Doubleday and said, "Frank, there are some persons I think a lot of, but I'll not tell you who they are!"

May 14, 1907, Teaneck Road,
Englewood, N.J.

When they came home this afternoon — Ralph and Arthur — two stalwart fellows, each now a man, earning his living, I said to their mother as we watched them from the window: "Do you realize that they are ours — these men?" And she said "No." And neither do I.

The Land and the People. 1907.

I will set down here several subjects and chapter heads of the book that I am to write by slow accumulation on the United States and Its People and Their Institutions.

Here is one suggestion: The meaning of the reverence in which Lincoln and Washington are held. Where is there any king or statesman that any other nation holds so high?

The bibliography must include De Tocqueville and Bryce, Mrs. Trollope and the other travellers.

All foreign writers have failed to catch the American sub-consciousness. We feel that even Bryce has written in a way from the outside.

May 16, 1907,
The Jeanes Board.

To-day I consented to become a member of the Board to

administer the Jeanes fund of a million dollars to help the work of primary negro schools. There are two reasons why I hesitated. (1) It is unpopular yet in the South to be identified too thoroughly with negro education; and I do sometimes become tired of the constant and senseless criticism directed against men who try to help the negro. (2) I am already a member of the Southern Education Board and of the General Education Board and I do not like to be regarded as a sort of "professional" Southern "reformer." I am an American citizen, and not merely a "Southerner." But I put both these reasons aside because they are both self-conscious and, therefore, both selfish reasons. The greater matter is, Can I be of service in this important work? If I can, it becomes an opportunity and, therefore, a duty. They say I can. Well, then, I will. That's the larger way to look at it.

May 17, 1907. The Periodical Publishers' Association went to Albany to-day by boat and had its annual dinner there. In its speeches the dinner was almost a failure. The public dinner, in fact, is an art; and it is usually done as badly as a magazine is made up or as many social functions are managed. To-night Governor Hughes spoke — far from any point of the occasion — for forty-five minutes. Old Joe Cannon, Speaker of the National House of Representatives, spoke also from the point and also — forty-five minutes. Speaking began at 10. It was 11.30 before any real speech could begin: then there were four to come! A public dinner ought not to be elaborate; it ought to begin early; a speech or two might be made before the dinner ends; every speech ought to be made on some particular subject; ought to be of some definite length — ought even, perhaps, to be edited!

May 21, 1907,
Lake Mohonk Conference
On Arbitration

W.A.W.P.[1] and I went to Lake Mohonk as the guests of Mr. Albert K. Smiley, for the thirteenth Conference on International Arbitration. Begun as the apparently eccentric propaganda of a Quaker, this movement has gone on till it has become a sort of institution and it now has an important influence on public opinion in the United States. It was ignored by the press practically for ten years; but now men of such eminence go to it that the discussions are of importance — this year, for instance, the Ambassador from Mexico, the Minister from Bolivia and other men from South America, Andrew D. White, a member of the first Hague Conference, President Eliot, of Harvard, and many such men.

The movement has been made practical and possible only by old Mr. Smiley's hospitality. He invites men and their wives as his guests. A pleasant free outing — good rooms, good food, good scenery, drives, etc. — and good company, bring them, most of whom would not otherwise go. It is a movement conducted by hospitality, as the Ogden movement for education in the South has been. It is the best machinery there is. Then, too, its persistence: it goes on year by year regardless of neglect or criticism. Thus this old Quaker, now nearly eighty, has, since he passed his sixty-seventh year, had an appreciable influence on American opinion touching a subject of world-wide importance.

In fact, to feed and to entertain a "movement" is the best practical way to put it forward: and there ought to be a Commissary and Entertainment Department of every Activity or Agitation.

[1] Mrs. Page.

But even with such a Department, an unhesitating persistence is necessary. The truly Homeric quality of old Mr. Smiley is his undiscouraged continuance without visible results. "These Conferences will go on," he said. "I am good for ten years more. My brother will outlast me. Then his son will come on and he has a son now a baby. He, too, will keep the habit up." This is the kind of faith and the kind of work that keeps the world going.

The method of keeping on, year by year, at anything — even if only a little time every year be given to it — brings cumulative results; and if to this iteration be added entertainment —!

New York, May 28, 1907. At the meeting of the General Education Board to-day John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was present. For more than a year he has hardly attended at all, having been ill, or concerned about his health — his heart, I think. He took an active and intelligent part in the discussion, and at dinner showed some wit and a good deal of companionship. This is good training for the "richest young man in the world."

It comes out more and more clearly at these Board meetings how many men who manage the funds of colleges evade frankness. They accept all sorts of gifts — unproductive land, embarrassing annuities and the like; and they manage their affairs rather with a sort of blind trust in Providence than with clear entries on their ledgers. Often their assets are really liabilities in disguised forms. The Board is doing much to systematize and to clarify their management and their bookkeeping. What could it do to lift the grade of their work? Or, better, to see that they do better teaching? This is worth very serious study. Perhaps I can draw up a plan, or at least start a discussion in the Board that may lead to a practical plan.

At the Board's dinner there was talk in which this idea came out: said someone: "The best teaching that I had was done in this fashion by my master, when I was a boy. For a week we would study Homer, Homer and nothing else. We read Homer in long stretches. We talked Homer on our walks; we had Homer at dinner; we slept with Homer. We did nothing else for a week. The next week, or perhaps for two or three days only, we took up geometry, and revelled in it in the same way. Contrast this with the method of taking a little Homer, a little geometry, and a little everything else every day."

"Why do our schools and colleges not sometimes follow this method?" I asked the University presidents who were there.

"Convention — routine — fashion," they answered. "Our machinery does not run in that way."

(But it is somewhat in that way that I mean Katharine to pursue her studies after this next year, which will be the last in her preparatory school. During the year she will be abroad with Miss Morse, this is the plan to follow. When she goes to college, why have her take the multitude of studies of which they get a smattering? Let her take only those subjects that she is most interested in and pursue them to some purpose.)

This story was told by Gates: "A boy went on, a clod, grudgingly doing his work, without a real interest and without ambition till he was nineteen. He gave little promise. Then it happened that he took to tennis. He found something that interested him. He played well. He enjoyed himself. He became ambitious. He won game after game, prize after prize, championship after championship. Then, when he came back to his studies and his other duties, he had set a pace for himself — a standard. The Holy Ghost had descended on him in the shape of

a tennis racket. He was a new boy. He had found himself!"

May 28, 1907.

What does a man owe to the South?

Alderman, President of the University of Virginia ($6,000 a year) has been offered the presidency of the University in St. Louis ($12,000 a year, and no begging to do). Shall he leave Virginia and the big reconstructive task that he has in hand there? "Yes," said I, without hesitation. "You have really won the battle in Virginia; you need not stay to do the details that follow. Now go to the wider field and the greater service to a greater number and to a fuller growth and freer life."

The main effort of good men, whether they work through government, through social organisms or however they work — their large main aim is, the building up of society so as to prevent social waste, so as to get the greatest social efficiency. Now here comes a thought: What society needs is better Construction. We go on in a haphazard way, stopping a little waste here, healing a wound there — relieving pain or want, but we do not make a comprehensive, constructive plan. Human society needs constructive management. Now one of the best pieces of constructive practical work ever done — to accomplish its purpose — one of the best examples of organization in our time — was done by John D. Rockefeller when he organized the Standard Oil Company. I don't know whether it follows that the same constructive brain could build up any definite plan (or make any contribution to a plan) to organize human society better; but might it not be worth while to see? Talks on the reconstruction of society with him might yield ideas. Worth trying, if I get time.

June 11, 1907. On my arrival at Mr. Hanna's [1] house at half past seven in the morning, Mrs. Hanna met me in the hall, graciously and heartily, as if she had not been blind. A more beautiful household you could not find — and she blind. She is a strong and very gracious personality; and the whole household have come into the habit of living as if she were not blind— on her own level. They read to her constantly, always talk with her and with reference to her. You see no thought nor ever hear any reference by them to her blindness, except in such beautiful ways as these — the flowers are arranged in the house with reference to their perfume — for her; and the new home that they have discussed building is made in a model so that she can feel it and talk about it better. There is a special grace and thoughtfulness throughout the household. That's a triumph of living — to turn such an affliction into a benediction.

Oct. 20, 1908.

Brownie in Europe; Frank in Harvard; Ralph going off on a canvass of lawyers to increase the salaries of Federal Judges, and trying, before he goes, to arrange a law partnership; Alice and Arthur and I at our winter "pension" 53 Irving Place, till we, too, go abroad: so we are here this October tf.[2] And here, God willing, I mean to finish "The Southerner," by Nicholas Worth.[3]

[1] Mr. Hugh H. Hanna, associated with Page in educational work.

[2] A printer's sign, meaning "till forbid," usually placed at the end of "want" advertisements, meaning that they are to be printed until instructions are issued to the contrary.

[3] For an account of this book, see "The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page," Vol. I, pp. 90–94.

To Cary Page Harris[1]

9 Buckingham Street,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.
19 November, 1898.

My dear Cary:

It was a greater pleasure than I can tell you to receive your letter a little while ago. I have not written sooner because I wished to wait till I found a quiet time; and these weeks have happened to be the very busiest in the whole year. They have gone before I knew it.

In fact I think you could not guess how very busy a life I lead — busy it has to be. My profession, which looks more attractive by far, I imagine, from the outside than it really is, is so very laborious that it would yield contentment only to a man who finds happiness in continual work.

But the work of twenty laborious years has not driven from my memory, nor dimmed in it, the years that will always be associated with you in Cary. I was there for a few hours last summer during my hurried trip to North Carolina, while I was too sick to work; and the twenty years simply dropped out of the calendar. The town, to me, was as it used to be long ago. The things that were visible were hardly seen; and the people who had gone were as real as those that were left. It was a delightful kind of dream. I was a boy again with a boy's dreams and enthusiasms, which you used so helpfully to share. When the train moved away with me I was half in that old world and half-way back towards the present world — confused for a time, till the old familiar scenes all passed out of sight and I came back into *this* world again.

True, we go over any particular epoch in life but once,

[1] Formerly Miss Cary Page, daughter of the Reverend Jesse Page — a cousin, and close friend and confidante of Walter Page in the old days at Cary.

but it is a happy faculty of mine as well as yours not to lose what is passed — not to lose it wholly, surely, for it comes back. And its power of coming back gives it an everlasting quality: it is perpetual in memory.

When you see your children sometimes, do they not startle you? I can never quite realize that my almost-grown boys are mine — or that they are grown. Ralph is a young fellow almost ready for college. He has gone to-day to the Harvard-Yale football game at New Haven — four hours' fast railroad ride from home. He wears long trousers and goes to parties. He reads Latin and German and is almost or quite at the same stage of his life that I associate in my life with the last years in Cary. — Whiz! go the years. — And you will never be in my mind older than you were before they began to fly. They have brought you much happiness with your family: well, that's what both the years and the family are made for; and if we don't get older than grown children in our own eyes, who has the right to say that we *are* older, or ever shall be?

I am going to see you one of these years — whenever, in fact, I can get a chance; and I'll wager any stake you like that I can recall more incidents of twenty years ago than you can. But I get a decreasing number of opportunities to get away from my work. I am beginning to give lectures now — every winter a few — partly in order to force myself away. In March I am going on that errand to Greensboro and maybe to Chapel Hill; but I very much fear that I shall have to come and go without a day that I can call my own.

Twice, I recall, you came to New York while I lived there. Boston is not much further; and if you should come here, we'd all take a holiday and make merry, you may be sure. Try it any time you like!

Give my regards to Dr. Harris and to your children, in all which Alice heartily seconds me, and believe me,

Affectionately yours,

COUSIN WALTER.

To Cary Page Harris

Charleston, South Carolina,
December 18, 1901.

MY DEAR CARY:

For a long time (but it has all been a long time ago) I heard conflicting rumours of the great compliment you have paid me — first that the boy was to be called Walter Page Harris; then that you were not going so to handicap him (poor little chap, not a mother's son or daughter of us can ever have a word to say about our own names!). I once wrote him a letter; and then I heard that there was another name given to him; and so the rumours ran that came to me.

In the meantime the months were flying and becoming years — with what swiftness! Heaven forgive us for wishing they ran more slowly after we pass forty, and more slowly yet after we pass forty-five!

But there have not been long intervals between my thoughts of that boy; for, while I feel immensely pleased at the honour you do me, I am not sure that it is fair to him. *He* may not like it, much as I am pleased.

But now that it's done, I must so live as to *make* him like it; and I'll try. But you must know that you are more daring than I am. I didn't dare put my own name on any one of my three boys. I did consent for Alice to put Walter in the middle of one of their names. But the rascal always shortens it, already, to a simple W. And so your boy'll do, if we don't watch him. "W. P. Harris" — that's the way

he'll write it; and nobody'll know but it stands for William Pitt or Wendell Phillips! Call him "Page." That's better than "Walter." . . .

This is only to send my affectionate regards and good wishes for a happy Christmas to you and all yours and very many of them; and there will reach you a little parcel for the young man which also goes with my most affectionate regards. When he gets older I'm going to make a bargain with him that we shall both live up to the name. I'll play my part of the game with all the dignity I can!

Let's make a statesman of the boy — what do you say? Unless his father wants him for a doctor, statesmanship is my proposal.

And I do hope to have the pleasure before very, very long of seeing both you and him. With my kindest regards to Dr. Harris, I am always yours affectionately, and now yours greatly honoured, too, and heartily,

WALTER PAGE.

To George A. Plimpton [1]

Charleston, S.C.
20 December, 1901.

MY DEAR PLIMPTON:

Here in this quiet, mellow, dying old town — a good place for a man to get acquainted with himself after he has had some years of the disturbance of relations between him and himself in the rattle and bang of activity — here a man may come face to face with his real nature; and I've come here, under pretence of seeing a show that doesn't exist — to rest and write. And it's fine — fine for a week. For a long period, of course, a real man would die.

But coming thus down to bottom facts, I have recalled

[1] Head of the publishing firm of Ginn and Company.

with great pleasure and very deep gratitude how much I like you and how much I owe you; and no better time will come to say so than now when I send you my heartiest Christmas good wishes and express the hope that no other year will come during which I shall see so little of you as I have seen during the past year.

To Katharine A. Page

St. Augustine, Florida
21 March, 1905.
Tuesday night.

Dear Brownie:

Stand up in front of your mother and say:

"Halt! Attention!"

When she stops and wonders what kind of a prank you are playing, say:

"My daddy has written you very many more letters than you have written him."

See what she says and write me.

Then tell her that, since you and she are going to Cambridge on the twenty-fifth, I'll not write to either of you again at Englewood before you go; but I may send a letter in care of Ralph or Arthur.

Then look deep down into your own conscience, hang your head, and count the letters that you have written yourself all this time to

Your old Daddy

To William Howard Taft[1]

March 3rd, 1911.

My dear Mr. President:

I enclose a statement which goes to show that the newspaper has superseded the book as a conveyer of speeches to the public. Fortunately, the income of the President doesn't depend upon this source, for book writing is the least lucrative of all noble occupations. We happened to publish the speeches of Daniel Webster, and the sales of "Political Issues and Outlooks," you may be interested to know, during the last six months have at least been greater than the sales of Webster's speeches.

To James C. Hemphill

November 17, 1910.

My dear Hemphill:

You are too kind to a visitor to one of his old homes and to an old friend in your good and flattering editorial which you have sent me. You say too much, my dear fellow; and in this you raise expectations in a way that it is hard for a fellow to live up to. But your kindness, while embarrassing, is heartily appreciated.

But may I call your attention to two unimportant slips that you make — just for the sake of accuracy? Of course I was never the editor of the New York *World*. I was a mere boy at the time I worked on it. At that same time you were, of course, in the full flood of your manhood, had reached maturity, and had not begun to go down the slope of Age. Your recollection, therefore, of a historic fact like this ought to be clearer.

On the main point, when you say that I am eccentric in

[1] At this time Mr. Taft was President. The firm of Doubleday, Page and Company had recently published a collection of his speeches, "Political Issues and Outlooks."

politics — there you do worse than forget. You are guilty of positive misrepresentation. I haven't voted the Democratic ticket as long as you have, but this is not my fault, but rather the fault of time. For, with all my virtues which you extol, it has been impossible for me to acquire age. That can be done quickest, of course, in Charleston and in Richmond. A man who lives in the world can't accumulate antiquity so fast. I have also voted for some Republicans.

Now if a man who votes for Democrats is eccentric, then just about half the people in the United States are eccentric; and if a man who votes for a Republican is eccentric, the other half of the people are eccentric. Nobody, therefore, except an antiquated person, would be guilty of indicting either half of the American people with eccentricity in such a fashion as you do.

My Lord, man, I've been guilty of pretty nearly all the follies of judgment that a young fellow can commit; but all these follies have been of a perfectly commonplace sort, as all my achievements have, and Nature never endowed me with sufficient ability to be eccentric or odd.

Now I write you this letter not only for my own sake, but only to remind you that you unconsciously give evidences in your kind daily compliments to your friends of the most fatal of diseases which is set down in the books of learning under the name of *Anno Domini.* I look forward with great pleasure to shaking the hand of so ancient a preceptor.

Very heartily yours, W. H. P.

P.S. Speaking about eccentricities, how are you and your friend Big Bill[1] getting along these days?

Major J. C. Hemphill,
The Times Dispatch
Richmond, Virginia.

[1] At this date, of course, "Big Bill" was William H. Taft.

CHAPTER XI

THE STRUGGLE FOR SOUTHERN EDUCATION

I

ALL during these active years Page never abandoned the cause that had formed the main purpose of his life from earliest days — the improvement of American citizenship through popular education. The great builder of the American democracy was not the statesman, the industrial leader, the pulpit exhorter; not even the scientist or the poet or the editor; the one figure on whom the national destiny depended was the school teacher. Never did Page let pass an opportunity to magnify the opportunities of this somewhat obscure and humble worker. As an editor — of the *Forum*, the *Atlantic*, and the *World's Work* — the subject of education always had the right of way. Page was constantly corresponding with educational leaders, searching out the new ideas, the places where these ideas had been most profitably developed, and more than once he organized elaborate and expensive "investigations" and thus presented the existing status of this great national enterprise to the American public. How importantly the school teacher loomed in his eyes appeared in a letter written, in 1896, to William R. Harper, the brilliant young President of the new University of Chicago.

To William Rainey Harper

October 24, 1896.

DEAR MR. HARPER,

The most interesting group of people, I have thought, I ever saw together — interesting for their social signi-

ficance — was the meeting at Buffalo last summer of the American Educational Association. There was nobody there but the American Public School Teacher. I do not think that there is a more interesting personality from one end of the Union to the other. Until lately she was very ill equipped for her work. She took to it because she had to earn her living in some way, at least until she married. She became aroused to the great opportunity, and she began to develop herself and to show singular fitness for the work.

In the meantime in most communities the teacher of the public school was regarded as a sort of semi-menial person. "Menial" is not quite the word, but she was not accorded the social position or given the social opportunities that would have enabled her to have the influence on the community and would have enabled the community to have the influence on the school that they ought to have had. So things have gone on. She now comes up to Worcester to learn the mysteries of psychology from Stanley Hall; she flocks to Chicago, and you know what you do for her there; she has risen to executive positions as well, and wherever she has so risen the work has become better arranged and better managed.

In a word, from the little that I know about the subject, the last ten years has shown as great improvement in the condition, efficiency, the organization and the influence of the public school teacher as in anything else. Yet it is probably true that the work requires a great deal better preparation, a great deal higher class people than have yet entered it. In spite of the impressiveness of the meeting at Buffalo I was struck by the fact that there was not a single man or woman there so far as I could find out really of first-rate ability. I was talking about this to a group of very thoughtful men and women at Buffalo, and I will

shock you by reporting what one of them said. "The truth is there are only three men of first-rate ability engaged in education in the United States; men, that is, as able as railroad presidents, or great manufacturers or great merchants." When the question was asked who these three men are, the speaker said "Presidents Eliot,[1] Harper,[2] and Jordan.". . .[3]

II

Interested as Page was in American education generally, his chief enthusiasm at this time centred in the South, for the good reason that there the need was most pressing. In the thirty-five years that Page had spent in the North, he always carried a vivid memory of the neglected figure that had haunted his early days — the ignorant and illiterate white man of the Southern States. Never once did he forget the teaching of the greatest American political philosopher on this subject. The failure of Virginia, and the rest of Page's native region, to adopt the ideas of Jefferson, he regarded as one of the most disastrous apostasies of history.

His speech in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1897, on "The Forgotten Man," its effect in giving the rising interest in Southern education a vibrant phrase at the precise moment when that great cause most needed it, the abuse from hidebound Southerners which it brought upon Page's head, and the vast influence it exerted in promoting that educational development which is the most striking fact in Southern life to-day — all this the writer has described in a previous volume.[4] The excitement caused by this startling arraignment of civilization in the Southern

[1] Of Harvard University. [2] Of Chicago University.

[3] Of Leland Stanford University.

[4] "Life and Letters of Walter H. Page," Vol. I, Chap. III.

States, the fierce debates that ensued in the Southern press, and the generally resulting pandemonium of epithet and challenge, led Page to repeat the experiment of his youth — to make a new tour of the Southern States, not unlike that which he had made in 1881,[1] and again to view conditions at first hand. At the time of his second pilgrimage — in the spring of 1899 — Page was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly;* rather a more important figure than the obscure correspondent who, eighteen years previously, had described the "reconstructed" South and set forth the promise of the new, to a large newspaper-reading public. One radical change had taken place in Southern life that made this a particularly worth while time to survey anew the whole scene. Wearied of the many devices commonly used for depriving the negro of that ballot guaranteed him by the Fifteenth Amendment, the Southern States had adopted a comprehensive plan of rendering it ineffective by legal process. The new laws varied in different States, but the central motive of all was the same: the plan was to disfranchise negroes by an educational test, so framed that, while it kept the illiterate black man from the polls, it did not exclude the illiterate white man. The favourite measure was one which deprived all men of the ballot who could not read and write, but which exempted from its operation those citizens whose fathers or grandfathers had enjoyed the franchise. These familiarly known "grandfather laws," which became the basic idea of the Southern States in handling the negro problem, had aroused anew national interest in the "Southern question" and made the year 1899 a timely one for Page's journey.

He made no public record of this trip, as he had of his previous one, though his observations gave him the ma-

[1] See *ante*, Chapter V.

terial for his Southern studies of the next ten years — for his lectures, his editorial writings and his novel, "The Southerner." The experience proved disheartening. In 1899 the South stood between two eras — the disorganized conditions left as a heritage of the war and reconstruction, and the modern period of prosperous times and expanding education. The whole country, indeed, North and West as well as South, had not yet recovered from the disastrous hard times that followed the panic of 1893. That the general character of Southern life was listless, discouraged, poverty-stricken, and backward-looking is therefore not surprising. Since Page himself decided not to describe publicly a state of society that appeared in his eyes "infinitely sad," there is no good reason for printing in this place the many personal letters that give his adventures in detail. Two selections — one written from New Orleans and one from Charleston — will suffice.

To Alice Wilson Page

New Orleans, March 2, 1899.

My dear Allie,

. . . I tell you, the sorry white man in the South is the real curse of the land. He is the fellow for whom Southern civilization sacrifices itself. He must be protected against the negro — hence race-friction and the caste feeling. He insists that he shall not be disfranchised because he is a white man; hence the negro has to suffer. Better white men cannot rise for him. He is at once the worst and most persistent product of slavery — the sorry Southern white man. His like exists in other parts of the country, but he does not set the pace elsewhere. The presence of the negro prevents him here from being frankly put at the bottom as he is put elsewhere . . .

These are very much more cheerful people than those that live anywhere else in the South. It may be the result of their settled and prosperous society, and the result, too, no doubt, of the French element of the population. Although the French have little or nothing to do with the Mardi Gras, it is surely their long presence here that makes it possible. The whole city goes on a mad whirl of spectacular revels, and there are balls without number. A more un-American thing could not be found the world over. They all take it seriously and spend $100,000 or more on one mad frolic every February — which, they confess, they can't afford.

The cold week had literally laid New Orleans waste. The palms which adorn every pretentious lawn were withered brown, the roses were all killed, the grass was dead in most places. The people all spoke of the utter devastation. But it is a beautiful city, though dirty beyond expression. Every afternoon ladies dressed in half summer costume were receiving their friends on their piazzas; babies were playing on the lawns; everybody was riding; it was like early June with us.

And the dark shadow is visible everywhere — negroes of all shades of colour, utterly cast out in politics, yet getting on in the world in every other way; and politics itself an unspeakable degradation. But over it all a sunny cheerfulness, with only hints here and there of the tragic possibility always beneath the surface.

It is a beautiful land to which all the world comes at this season and from which all the world flies in summer — a world of old Southern mellowness tinted with a French dash of colour, made sombre by cathedrals and nuns and with the white man's caste and the white man's burden more tightly drawn and more heavily laid on than in any other land I ever saw. In its social graces the society forget

the yellow fever and the negro — the insidious gloom and the smouldering volcano (if indeed it be a volcano); for it will perhaps forever remain only a dead weight.

To Horace E. Scudder

Charleston, S.C.
18 March, 1899.

My dear Mr. Scudder:

This State is the hardest nut to crack that I've ever had between my teeth. It isn't only the negro that is a puzzle, but the white man even more. Nobody understands the South Carolinian — the Carolinian as he has always presumptuously called himself; and least of all does he understand himself, for of himself he never thinks philosophically. If you take him as a host he is the pleasantest fellow on the whole round earth; but if you view him as a phenomenon he eludes classification and defies description. I am, therefore, I fear, simply losing time on him. Every day new things turn up and mighty interesting things; and my note book is large and full. But since this is really the starting point of the peculiar people, as it was, in a way, of the peculiar doctrines and the peculiar institutions, I have been hoping to get several tangled threads of my knowledge straightened out.

So far as the negro is concerned, I'd rather be an imp in hades than a darkey in South Carolina. One decided advantage that the imp has is — personal safety. Yet there are very strange contradictions. This is the only Southern city that I know of where white women of good social station teach negro schools and lose nothing thereby. The women of "blood" do that here. Yet in the same town Northern women who teach in negro schools cannot obtain even the slightest social recognition. And it is here

that the experiment is about to be made of putting negro labour in a cotton-mill — by a South Carolina man. "The Germans own the town, the Irish rule it, the negroes enjoy it" — this is a coloured preacher's description of Charleston; and the white men say it's true. Yet the old blue blood clings fast to its social idols; and there are women in good society here — the very best society — who sew for negroes; and they never see the negroes! Neither will they see or ever admit to their houses the whites for whom they sew.

The only new building that I have seen in the city, a mammoth auditorium, on which they are at work at night and on Sundays, is an auditorium to hold the meeting of Confederate survivors of Sons and Daughters, who are all coming here in May. They talk about that meeting as devout Jews might talk about the assembling of all the tribes in Jerusalem.

I can't find white men here whose view of the negro has essentially changed since slavery. Booker Washington told me last week that the result of his work of which he is proudest is the fast-changing attitude of the white man — the Southern white man. But he hasn't changed here — not a whit. Yet here are these white school-ma'ams! Make you a generalization, and the next hour you find that you must throw it away.

The *News and Courier* has been very kind. The editors have left their work to pay me attention. They dine, they drive, they go about and get groups of people together and they arrange receptions all with reference to me. I meant to go away to-day and after making a one-day stop elsewhere to go straight to Boston and be there Wednesday morning. But they have made arrangements for a reception to me to-night; and I don't dare leave: they'd shoot me, I fear. When you come to Charleston, you'll

find out that you instinctively put on your best suit of p-and-q manners! And you generally do as you are asked to do.

I find no evidence that these people ever read books or magazines; and yet they tax me with the expansionist attitude of the *Atlantic*. I have had the wit to tell them that the home of Secession is naturally the home of "Anti-Expansion." Then they have reminded me that the home of Abolition is now of the same mind; and the most delicious thing in the world of queer bedfellows is to hear a Carolina Bourbon approvingly quote Senator Hoar![1] I haven't seen a glass of any sort of grog since I came here, but they point with pride to the house where Daniel Webster used to send for his wine. The Dispensary is yet in operation. But to find out whether it is a good thing or a bad thing is as hard a task as ever I tried.

One of my friends, who is a Presbyterian parson of the blue-and-brimstone kind, denounces it with the vigour of John Calvin. Another who is a president of a college declares that it has wrought a revolution for good morals; but he asks me not to quote him. It's all a tangle. But one thing is clear — they shoot, and the poor darkey hasn't any sort of a show.

On top of all that they are the gentlest folk in the world and the best-mannered. But I'm going home. Look for me — I'd better say Thursday.

III

Any change in Southern conditions must necessarily be a slow process. The transformation of a great society is not a matter of a formal and quickly working programme. The only possible chance for a new enlightenment lay along the

[1] George Frisbie Hoar, Senior Senator from Massachusetts, and an earnest opponent of Philippine annexation. See *ante*, page 267.

lines that Page, when little more than a boy, had preached so valiantly and so unsuccessfully in his Raleigh newspaper. History sometimes has the benevolent custom of gathering in one spot a small group possessing the particular attainments and character required to advance great public causes. In American annals the outstanding illustration is the company of noble Virginians — Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Marshall — whom fate brought together in the Potomac region at the moment when their potent qualities were most needed for the creation of the United States. Similarly, fortune brought to the University of North Carolina, in the very year that Page held his lectureship, a group of ardent young reformers who were destined to exercise a determining influence upon the modern growth of the South. One of these, Edwin A. Alderman, has already described his first glimpse [1] of Page — aged twenty-three — lecturing one summer evening in an ancient building at Chapel Hill. The letter of Charles B. Aycock, another of this boyish company, telling Page how greatly his "Mummy" articles had impressed him, has already been published.[2] Another of these pathfinders, Charles W. Dabney, himself a graduate of the University of Virginia, came to Chapel Hill in 1880 as Professor of Chemistry, and, in company with Page, was a member of the Watauga Club in Raleigh. The most striking and energetic man of all was Charles D. McIver, a graduate of North Carolina University in 1881. James Y. Joyner, under whose administration North Carolina has established her modern public school system, was likewise graduated from the University in 1881.

All five men brought to this reform their own contributions of brain and spirit. The association was a per-

[1] See *ante*, page 119. [2] See *ante*, page 192.

sonal as well as a public one. The members usually called each other by their first names, or by comradely equivalents. They were "Ed" Alderman, "Charley" Dabney, "Charles" Aycock, and the like — but the one who has left the most indelible personal impress, because of his vast vitality and his genial fellowship, was the one always known, not only to this group, but to practically the whole populace in North Carolina, as "Old Mac." The "old" was merely a term of affection, for Charles D. McIver died at the age of forty-five — a victim to a seething career, dedicated exclusively to popular education. There was a homely earnestness about him that suggested Braxton Craven, the rustic President of Trinity College from whom Page had first learned the gospel of the public school. When McIver came to Chapel Hill, in 1877, he was an exceedingly homespun product of a backwoods North Carolina farm; until then he had never visited a place even so large as this little college town, and the university buildings, manhandled as they had been by the reconstruction era, appeared in his eyes a sight of unparalleled magnificence. The boy McIver, as well as the man, was a great, ruddy, freckled-faced countryman — big in person, big in brain; with large round childlike eyes, well-filled cheeks, huge shoulders, and yet with a body quick and nervous in its movements, as far removed from the traditional Southern repose as his mighty laughter was removed from the discouragement that too commonly formed the background of Southern life. Few men could fight so persistently for a cause, and yet fight with such undeviating good nature. Few could so enforce their arguments with alternating facts, pathos, eloquence, and funny stories. There was something almost ferocious in McIver's enthusiasm, yet in his methods laughter and even buffoonery went hand in hand. "He was the very impersonation

of cheerful combat," said Page. "He could put the wisdom of ages into a barnyard story which any rustic could understand and on which no philosopher could make an improvement." The greatest gift of "Old Mac" was that of transforming every human being into a brother. "I suppose," Page said, "that he was regarded as a close personal friend by more men and women, and he had the intimate confidence of more men and women, than any other man in North Carolina. The man who was most engrossed and the slow fellow who had merely dull and intermittent impulses to be of some use in the world — each alike came to him as a friend. . . . Now this genius for helpfulness is a quality of only very great natures." McIver's buoyant temperament, his industry, his absorption in his favourite cause, made him that rarest of all human kind — the indomitable, resourceful leader. He could laugh as vigorously as Page himself at the traditions that kept Southern life so restricted. "I think," said Page, "no human creature ever got more joy out of life, for every event fed his jocularity" — but at bottom no man ever lived who was more serious. Interested as he was in all-around education, the cause that chiefly inspired his zeal was the education of women. The neglected and forgotten woman — there was the waif that McIver set himself to redeem. Underlying this purpose was a well-thought-out philosophy. The quickest way to accomplish the ultimate end — the education of every boy and girl, white and black — was, McIver believed, the preparation of the woman. "Educate a girl," he would say, "and you have educated a whole family" — for an educated girl, once she has children of her own, will be sure to see that they are properly trained, whereas men are not so careful. The great story that was now beginning in the South has no finer chapter than the one that tells of McIver's struggle

to establish the Normal School at Greensboro — an institution for training the teachers of the new generation.

Long before he accomplished his life task, however, McIver had worked great results for the general cause. In this his associate was Edwin A. Alderman, his friend and college-mate in the University. Genially as the two men worked together, in mental qualities they were utterly unlike. Far from having the tempestuous nature of McIver, Alderman was quiet, polished, urbane — with talents that made him in succession the President of three universities, North Carolina, Tulane, and Virginia. Yet both McIver and Alderman began their educational careers in humble guise. As young university graduates, they became primary school teachers — instructing small children in the elementary branches. For twenty years, however, these men devoted a large part of their energy to stirring up the people on popular education. McIver took the western area as his particular field — that mountainous country, the land of America's "contemporary ancestors," the headquarters of the most exclusively Anglo-Saxon population, where the speech and manners and folklore of Shakespeare's England still persist — the section which, in recent years, has given inspiration to American literature and the American stage. Alderman devoted his eloquence chiefly to the eastern region. The burden of this campaign, which lasted three years, was education — education — education. The Legislature had provided the machinery in the shape of so-called "teachers' institutes" — essentially roving commissions to improve educational conditions. Wherever these young exhorters could assemble an audience — in mountain cabins, in rural schools, in open fields, at the crossroads — they forced their theme.

The real achievement of McIver and Alderman was to make the soil fertile for another member of their own uni-

versity group. All these years Charles B. Aycock had been forging ahead as one of the leaders of the modern North Carolina. His road was the law and public life. No man was ever more fortunate in identifying a political career with an indispensable issue. For a generation, candidates for public office had fed the electorate with descriptions of battles, glorifications of Southern history, denunciations of the "nigger," appeals for Confederate pensions — always, as Page said, the Same Subject; Aycock brushed all this lumber aside, and startled the State from one end to the other with his pleas for a public school system. The response showed how effectively the earlier voices — Page, McIver, Alderman, Dabney and the rest — had done their work. In April, 1900, the Democrats turned almost unanimously to Aycock and nominated him for the first office in the State. In January of 1901 his great career as the first "educational governor" of the South began.

Meanwhile a group of Northern men, as notable for character as their Southern compatriots, had aroused national interest in the same cause. It was Walter Page's good fortune to belong to both wings — the Southern and the Northern — and thus to form the link that connected the two. Ever since the Civil War, Northern philanthropists had shown much interest in the education of the negro. The North had emancipated the negro and not unnaturally felt a distinct responsibility for improving his status as a citizen, while the negro himself was not backward in capitalizing this friendly attitude. Negro schools, usually taught by pious spinsters from Northern States, sprang up in all parts of the South; more pretentious "universities" for training negroes in literature and the arts, and especially for educating negro preachers, were insistently clamouring for support. Practically all these enterprises were maintained by alms collected in Northern

Charles Brantley Aycock (1859–1912), who as the great "educational governor" of North Carolina (1901–1905) led the popular movement that resulted in a tax-supported public school system

centres. The presence of dusky gentlemen in the anterooms of large business and professional houses, and their appearance in the pulpits of Protestant churches, had for years been a regular feature of Northern life. These coloured brethren had only one aim — they were begging money for negro schools. The pursuit of collections for such purposes had become almost a profession in itself, and the suspicion grew that too large a percentage of the proceeds rested in the pockets of the canvassers as commission. The rise of certain negro institutions of high order — especially those at Hampton, Virginia, and at Tuskegee, Alabama, which centred their efforts on teaching the negro the science of farming, brick-laying, blacksmithing, carpentering, cooking, sewing and housewifery in general — led to a new stock-taking on the whole matter. The general feeling was that negro education, with the exception of these new institutions that laid chief emphasis on the practical side, was being badly and wastefully done.

IV

A group of Southern and Northern men, for the most part clergymen, gathered at a hotel in Capon Springs, Virginia, on June 29, 1898, to discuss "Christian education in the South." The topic that mainly interested this gathering was the training of the negro. The most important attendant was Dr. J. L. M. Curry, a Confederate veteran and ex-Minister to Spain, who for many years had been agent of the fund left by George Peabody for education in the South. Out of this gathering grew the Southern Education Conference — also at first an association chiefly concerned in teaching black men. This conference rapidly developed into something more comprehensive, because its direction fell into the hands of a few unusual men. Foremost was Mr. Robert C. Ogden, a great New York

merchant — the partner of John Wanamaker, and a life-long friend of General Samuel C. Armstrong, the creator of Hampton Institute — the influence that brought Mr. Ogden into touch with negro education. As time went on, Mr. Ogden's leadership of the Southern Education Conference was so important that this particular enterprise soon became known as the "Ogden movement," and Southern critics, who were at times extremely suspicious, sometimes referred to it as "Ogdenism." Mr. Ogden brought together a brilliant company — among them Page himself, George F. Peabody, H. B. Frissell, Wallace Buttrick, and William H. Baldwin. Mr. Baldwin stood out even in such an assemblage as the Ogden fraternity. His brief career, for he died at forty-two, was a blow, not only to this particular cause, but to American citizenship itself. A graduate of Harvard, Mr. Baldwin had made his own way in life, had gained high place in American railroading and finance, but had found his real occupation in public work, such as combating municipal corruption and giving eagerly of his time and means to the betterment of the negro. His real quality came out when an anxious friend asked whether his position as chairman of the Committee of Fifteen, a citizens' organization formed to help redeem New York from the appalling degradation of Tammany rule, would not interfere with his work as President of the Long Island Railroad. "If it does," replied Mr. Baldwin, "I'll resign from the railroad." "There was a clear light in his eyes" — this is Page's tribute after Mr. Baldwin's death — "and a boundless energy in his work (he always stood at his desk); he made all good men his friends; and humble workmen on his road knew him as well as the men of great power with whom he was associated. There was something so fine in his character that no one who felt it once will ever forget him. He was an inspiring example of the chivalry of a democracy."

Mr. Ogden's method of promoting the cause was his own invention. Once a year for several years he chartered a train from the Pennsylvania Railroad, filled it with seventy-five or a hundred selected enthusiasts, and voyaged through the South, stopping at educational centres, inspecting educational conditions, holding public meetings, and in general stimulating thought and action. Mr. Ogden vastly enjoyed his occupation as host, and cheerfully wrote his check for the expenses — which averaged $25,000 a trip. The excursions brought together the Southern and the Northern group; Page became a kind of link between the two sections — many of his most eloquent addresses were made in the course of these pilgrimages. Mr. Ogden's position was a delicate one. The interest felt by Northern philanthropists in the progress of the negro was likely to be received not too understandingly in certain influential quarters. The fact that so many Southern leaders attended the conferences, and that so many leading Southern organs of public opinion applauded the work, did not protect the "Ogden circus," as certain irreverent Southern critics dubbed it, from the epithets that occasionally followed enterprises of the kind. The truth was that, in the early experimental days, the Conference was inaccurately keyed. Its emphasis, following the traditional Northern instinct, was laid too strongly on the negro. The problem of Southern education was much more inclusive than that. Mr. Ogden's studies had not gone far before a startling discovery was made. This was that, in certain regions, more money was being spent for negro than for white education. Page himself posed the real problem in a statement made to a newspaper reporter at the session at Winston-Salem in 1901. The opposition journals had been insinuating for some time that, if the Ogden proceeding were carefully scrutinized, "a nigger in the

woodpile" would be revealed. Page was questioned on this point.

"No," he replied, "if you will turn the woodpile over, you will not find a 'nigger' but a white child."

This remark, widely quoted, fixed the Southern educational problem, in its most pressing aspect. The Conference at which it was made proved the most critical one of the series. An observant but not loquacious attendant was the younger Mr. Rockefeller. Charles B. Aycock, now Governor of North Carolina, opened the proceeding with one of his impassioned pleas for a public school system, supported by taxation, for the benefit of both the black and the white child. This Conference led to the organization of the Southern Education Board. There were eleven members — six from the South and five from the North. Among the Southerners were Alderman, Dabney, McIver — "Southern men," said Page, "of continental breadth of thought who are among the most useful citizens of the Republic"; Mr. Ogden was chairman; and other Northerners were Peabody, Buttrick, Hugh H. Hanna, William H. Baldwin — and Walter Page, a man who by this time could fairly be claimed by both sections. The organization was completed and a plan of activities adopted, a few months afterward, at Mr. Ogden's lunch table, the other members present being Baldwin, Dabney, Peabody, and Page.

The Southern Education Board was created purely for information and agitation. It distributed no money and indeed at no time had any large amount. Its purpose was to expose Southern educational conditions to the nation, in the expectation that merely circulating the facts would cure the evil. "This is the biggest move," Page wrote to Paul Hanus, Professor of the Art of Teaching at Harvard, "in normal and popular education ever made at

one stroke in this country." His correspondence of this period discloses the eagerness with which he began the work. "I cannot tell you with what pleasure I shall go to Wrightsville," he wrote Edwin Mims, anticipating an address he was to make at a gathering of pedagogues. "I shall be glad of a chance to meet so many teachers. They carry the ark of the covenant in North Carolina." An excellent idea of the kind of work the members of the Southern Education Board performed is obtained from the following letter, written soon after the Board's organization.

To Wallace Buttrick

April 11, 1902.

DEAR DR. BUTTRICK:

I send you this while I think of it — for no use but only for your personal information, if it should at any time, or in any way, turn out that I can serve the Board on any of these trips, or through any of these channels, by getting specific information, or by doing anything else.

June 13th. — I shall address the North Carolina Teachers' Association at Wrightsville, on Education towards Freedom of Speech. I am going to roast alive certain old preachers that have been scaring the courage out of these teachers — an old Praise-God-Barebones crowd.

On June 17th I am going to deliver the Commencement Address at the Jacob Tome Institute at Port Deposit, Maryland.

Later (in July) I am going to Dabney's summer school at Knoxville to speak about a week on

Whatever else you Do, for the Love of Heaven
write the English Language as well as you can.

I shall soon have off the press a little volume of addresses and magazine articles by me, called "The Rebuilding of

Old Commonwealths," all about the *Necessity of Free Public Education in the South by Taxation, because both the Old Aristocratic System of Education and the Ecclesiastical System Failed to Reach the People.* This is printed at my own expense to give away to anybody who will read it.

I shall publish indefinitely in almost every number of the *World's Work* editorials and articles along the same lines, suggestions for which will be thankfully received.

The Outlook in the Fall will begin a series of twelve or more articles by me on the General Southern situation, wherein I shall follow out in detail my article that will soon appear in the *Atlantic Monthly* on *The Development of Democracy* (not political, of course) *in the Old Southern States.*

I sometimes snap the Sunday ministrations of Dr. Rainsford [1] and write editorials on our subject for *The Outlook* or *The Times* or other papers; and I am under promise to write for the *Boston Transcript*, the *Kansas City Journal*, the *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, and the *Chicago Record-Herald* a number of articles on the same general subject.

Everybody's Magazine is edited in our office and I shall follow my recent sketch of Booker T. Washington with some similar matter later.

I shall write in the summer another article for the *Atlantic Monthly* on *The Political Side of Southern Education.*

So that whatever I can write, wherever I can get in a word, or wherever at any time I can go and do anything for the cause — these are my tools and channels and ways of doing it; and I am at the service of the Board for field-work, pen-work or tongue-work — all, of course, and always at my own expense.

This is a mere personal memo. to you and Mr. Baldwin.

[1] Dr. William S. Rainsford, the famous rector of St. George's Church in New York and a good friend of Page.

Page's experiences were not without their humorous incidents. On one occasion he was addressing an audience at the University of Virginia, as a guest of his friend and co-worker, President Alderman. In the course of his speech he referred to the Civil War as "merely an incident in the expanding life of a nation." After Page had finished, an old Confederate veteran who had lost an arm and had a cork leg and had been rather badly mauled in other respects, came up to President Alderman.

"What did Page say the Civil War was?" he asked.

"He said it was 'merely an incident in the expanding life of a nation.'"

"Well," said the veteran, "if he had been there I guess he would have thought it was a hell of an event."

V

One of the greatest services Page rendered the Board was done so quietly and yet with such rapier-like efficiency, that the general public had no inkling of it. The influence that had chiefly held Southern education back, he always insisted, was sectarianism. Page was the last man to object to the Church as a great social and religious force; he held fast to the fundamental American principle, however, that the education of the masses was not the Church's province but the State's. He early foresaw the likelihood that the ecclesiastical interests of the South, which were powerful, would capture the great enterprise now fairly launched. The Board had been in existence little more than a year when something resembling such an attempt was made. An important Southerner was proposed as a member, not on the ground that he was an educator, but on the ground that he was a Methodist.

To Robert C. Ogden

34 Union Square, New York.
December 17, 1903.

My dear Mr. Ogden:

. . . My thought, then, is this. The large and all-inclusive aim that we have, to which educational work is but one means, is to encourage the freedom of men in the South. That done, they will themselves solve all "problems."

When our Board was organized, the response that I heard everywhere was of this sort: "Here is a broad and free force — free from political and church and sectional control." Every liberal man that I know in the South felt an exhilaration. We put a new idea of Education in the minds of men there — a patriotic, broad idea. We put it on a level of sound economics and high statesmanship. It had before been on the lower level of some social class, or of charity, or of some church. Above the century-long wrangles of this lower level we stood high and apart.

And we soon had two occasions to show this freer and higher conception of our relation to the South — as we all felt it, I think.

(1) When Mr. Tucker was thinking of running for Congress, we told him without a moment's hesitation that he must choose between our Board and politics. We could not afford to be thought of as touching any political party officially.

(2) When Dr. Smith of Randolph-Macon approached the General Education Board, it told him that it could not officially coöperate with any church institution, because it would excite jealousies.

Wise actions, both. The election of the man now proposed would be construed and received universally as a

"recognition" of the Methodist Church. It would, therefore, have three results:

(1) The most liberal men in the South, who have been stimulated and cheered by our high and independent position, would say: "It is like all the rest, at last — a Board on which everything must be 'represented' — not a Board primarily to do an independent work." For one hundred years most things organized in the South to advance education have been organized not on the basis of doing something, but of "representing" everything. Hence the decay of personal liberty and the growth of the power of ultra-conservative organized parties, political, social and ecclesiastical.

It is only within a few years, for example, that a professor could be elected at the University of North Carolina on his scholarship and character only. He must be a Methodist, an Episcopalian or what not — to keep the equilibrium of church representation in the faculty.

If we go to "recognizing" church parties, we shall discourage liberal men — men like Kent, Aycock, Sanford, Fries, Blair. They will not say so publicly, for they do not care to wake the sleeping dogs of church war. But they will feel it.

Moreover, our free spirit and high aim lead us to oppose prescriptive methods against any man or set of men. This is our very charter right to existence. But the Methodist and Baptist churches in the South practically proscribe the negro. They go and preach to him in his own church. But they set him off by himself. No negro is welcome in one of their white churches. Now this is a kind of religion that cannot stand up straight before God or man. Hence these church parties are (in necessary defence of their position) hesitant and apologetic even when not hostile in dealing with the negro and negro education.

(2) The Southern Methodist party will feel "recognized" by us — feel a proprietary interest in us. It is the same sorry tale that has been acted forth in many forms ever since the Methodist and the Presbyterian parties seceded before the Confederate States left the Union.

If then we mean justice and education and opportunity to all men alike, we cannot train with these church parties any more than we can train with any political party — nor be construed as training with them.

(3) If we "recognize" the leading Methodist college, we must "recognize" a Baptist college by electing its President; a Presbyterian college; and so on. Else we shall stir up their jealousy and make enemies of them.

These three classes — the Liberal men, the Methodist party and the rival church parties, constitute most of the white population in the South. We should displease them all except the Methodists at once, and we should some day have to fight for our freedom from a Methodist alliance — then we should displease them.

Mr. Y, I am sorry to say, calls this view "the first case of religious intolerance that has shown itself in our Board." But it has, as I see it, nothing to do with religion, nor with intolerance. I am talking about parties in the South — the Democratic party, the Republican party, the Methodist party, the Daughters-of-the-Confederacy party, the Baptist party, etc. Nor am I talking about tolerance, except that they will not tolerate us if we put our heads in their official noose. Some bishop will some day pull the rope — sure. They have taken bread out of men's children's mouths for opinions' sake; and I, for one, am unwilling to put our Board in their power. . . .

And I do most heartily hope that in this opinion there is no hint or tinge of intolerance. If I know my own heart, I feel no intolerance toward anybody nor towards anything.

My point is that our Board must keep itself free from all parties (and these churches are parties as well as churches) and continue to be an inspiration to men who are struggling for freedom.

I doubt if there has been a week in twenty years but some Southern man has told me or written to me of his sense of suffocation — his longing for fresh air; and their troubles have come much oftener from church parties than from political parties. What I am trying to explain, therefore, is not a thing of my imagination or of my experience (which I should regard as of little value and not worthy of mention), but of the experience of many of the best men in the South — among them some of the members of our Board.

Practically no other rifts disturbed Page's association with the Southern Education Board. At times he would write Mr. Ogden expressing his regret that he could not give even more time to the work. "In my judgment," Mr. Ogden answered, "you are furnishing a large proportion of the brains of the campaign." It is doubtful whether any labour of Page's life, even the British Ambassadorship, gave him greater satisfaction than his contribution to this cause. "Not the least part of the Board's work," he wrote Dr. J. H. Kirkland, Chancellor of Vanderbilt University, welcoming him to the General Education Board, "is what, for the lack of a better name, I shall call its spiritual communion and uplift; and in that, too, we shall all profit by your presence and coöperation. One of these days, if I can ever have time and I can get my pencil sharpened at the right angle, I am going to try to tell what the Board has meant to me (and I am sure it has meant a corresponding thing to all the other members) by giving me a continual encouragement in trying to be of some little help to further

right ideas and in drawing me out of my own more or less personal affairs into a clearer and wider atmosphere. It is an experience such as a man cannot have many times or by many kinds of associations of one's life."

To Edwin Mims

Teaneck Road, Englewood, N.J.
15 May, 1904.

DEAR MIMS:

Your letter gives me much pleasure. The newspaper report of the address is very incomplete.[1] If in this form it took any hold on you, I am sure it was worth doing — it proves that the underlying idea of it is worth saying and saying and saying. What the South's got a chance to do is to *lead.* There's no use in stopping short of that. The effect of the croakers and the critics and all kinds of narrow men has been to make us forget that we once had leadership. They keep us forever in the lowlands of complaint. Let's keep sounding the note of leadership and the next generation will hear it and take it up and *do* it, praise God.

The following was Page's greeting to Mr. Ogden on his seventieth birthday, written from a lofty mountain peak in western North Carolina.

To Robert C. Ogden

June 17, 1906.

MY DEAR MR. OGDEN,

This, to carry my congratulations, my gratitude and my good wishes. You are built to beat the prophets; for at three score and ten, you are in the full current of a great influence to uplift our country, sails set and rudder true.

[1] The reference is to Page's address, "The Unfulfilled Ambition of the South," delivered at the Seventh Southern Education Conference at Birmingham, Alabama, April 26, 1904.

From this eminence (the sky is clear and the Indian's Red Bird Mountain, "Toxaway," gives a vision into three states) it is easy and exhilarating to see the great changes that are already come. Here flock bankers from the towns of these States — manufacturers, schoolmen, merchants, numbers of young couples, just paired, with Paradise in their eyes; and the manner and the talk of them all look upward and outward from the past. It is a new day, compared with the old day, in the South of my youth; and I am glad to be alive to see it.

And we shall never forget your part in it. Many, many birthdays be in store for you!

My kindest regards, please, to Mrs. Ogden and Mrs. Purves [Mr. Ogden's daughter] and much happiness to you all!

To Robert C. Ogden

1907. [sic]

My dear Mr. Ogden:

I first thought to write here my personal pleasure and profit that have come from my association with you in your great work of stimulating Southern thought and building up Southern character and firing Southern men to the most patriotic endeavour.

But the public service that you have done to the South, to the whole country and to our time, over-rides all merely personal profit and pleasure and even personal obligation, great as that is. Let me say, then, as a follower to a great leader, how whole-souled my admiration is of this service, of your shining captaincy, and how deep my thanks as a beneficiary of it all. Then the uplift that I have myself received takes its place as all incident.

May many more years be yours — you who fill all your

years so full by opening long vistas and disclosing large vision to us who follow.

With gratitude, loyalty and esteem,

WALTER H. PAGE.

To Wallace Buttrick

Feb. 10, 1907.

DEAR BUTTRICK:

I couldn't resist the impulse to send Mr. Gates a telegram from Montgomery in which I spoke my warm felicitations for you, too. Big thing, sure! Just while it was happening, I was with Father Knapp in conference with his Alabama demonstrators; and they seemed to me to be the right sort of revolutionists. He surely is an inspiration at that work.

Well, the world lies before us. It'll not be the same world when we get done with it that it was before: bet your last penny on that — will you? This in spite of the fact that I read here in the New Orleans *Times-Democrat* an argument to prove that an effort to help men always hinders them! The human mind (of the other fellow) is the most inscrutable work of God, and it moves in mysterious ways its idiosyncrasies and idiocies to perform. That gives us our reason for being and for working and a boundless inspiration!

Yours cheerfully —
very —
WALTER H. PAGE.

Dr. Buttrick, afterward President of the General Education Board, to whom this letter was written, became one of Page's closest friends. Dr. Buttrick's estimate of his coworker, and the part he played in the education movement,

appears in a letter, written after Page's death, to their common friend, Edwin Mims. "Since his death," said Dr. Buttrick, "I have been reading his little book, 'The Rebuilding of Old Commonwealths.' I read much of it aloud to Flexner and to Dillard at Johns Hopkins Hospital. They share my conviction that nothing finer and more fundamental has ever been written regarding the education of a democracy than those three articles. I was with Page in London for nearly four months and my admiration for him increased every day until I fairly stood in awe of his moral and intellectual greatness."

Mr. Flexner, to whom Dr. Buttrick refers, is Mr. Abraham Flexner, for many years Secretary of the General Education Board. His opinion, expressed in a letter to the present writer, may be repeated in this place. "Page," he wrote, "was one of the real educational statesmen of this country — probably the greatest we have had since the Civil War."

VI

On the personal side, the Southern Education movement had its tragic episodes. Mr. Baldwin died a few years after the work began. One day, soon afterward, a telegram was handed Page from Mrs. Charles D. McIver. "Dr. McIver," it read, "died suddenly to-day on a train near Hillsboro." He had fallen a victim of heart disease — and a martyr to the cause that had given him for twenty years few hours of rest. On the evening of April 4, 1912, Charles B. Aycock was speaking on his favourite subject before a great audience in a theatre at Birmingham, Alabama. "Sometimes on Sundays," he said, "they asked me down to the church to talk, and I always talked about education" — and with that word "education" on his lips he fell dead before an audience that had just been applauding him.

No movement in American history had a more practical success than the one to which these men, and their Southern and Northern associates, dedicated their efforts. No gathering has had greater influence than "The Conference for Christian Education in the South," held in Sale's Hotel at Capon Springs, Virginia, in 1898. This, as already explained, was originally a denominational effort to improve the status of the negro. In three years it had become the annual "Conference for Southern Education," no longer limited in its membership to clergymen, and in its scope to the black man. This Conference itself presently grew into the Southern Education Board, a body devoted to enlightening the South on the need of a great, free, tax-supported public school system, for both the white and the negro population. Almost simultaneously with the organization of the Southern Education Board, the General Education Board came into existence. The duty of the first was to stimulate the revival — to talk, to write, to agitate; the duty of the second was to assemble the money with which these ideas could be put into operation. Mr. Baldwin became President of the General Education Board and Mr. Ogden, Chairman, while six of its ten members, including Page, were also members of the Southern Education Board. The two organizations, however, were kept distinct. Mr. John D. Rockefeller gave the General Board $1,000,000 for this purpose when it began its work — and this was only the first step in a philanthropy that has reached all sections of the world. Among Page's papers is a letter from Mr. Ogden, as Chairman, summoning him to a special meeting of the General Education Board on June 20, 1905, "for the reception and consideration of an important communication." On this paper appears the following annotation in Page's handwriting: "At this meeting Mr. John D. Rockefeller gave ten millions of dollars."

This large gift was the result of the presence of the younger Mr. Rockefeller at the Winston-Salem meeting of 1901. Up to the present writing, the General Education Board has appropriated $122,000,000 (all Rockefeller money) for education in the United States. In the distribution of this vast sum Page played an important part. Though the scope, from the first, was national rather than sectional — it has since become international — in the earliest days the General Education Board made great contributions to building up the public school system in the Southern States. In its expenditures for this purpose Page's advice naturally had great influence.

The growth of education in the South; the creation of fine primary schools in nearly every district and of the most modernly equipped high and normal schools in nearly every county; the development of Southern universities; the quickening of Southern life that has inevitably followed in nearly all departments — this is now one of the most familiar of American stories. The change means more than the erection of so much brick and mortar and the assembling of so many millions of dollars for public instruction. It means a complete spiritual transformation of the Southern mind — a transformation which, Page insisted from boyhood, was essential if the South were to reassume an important rôle in American life. It means the final abandonment by the South of its aristocratic standard as the basis of society. It was in the hope of bringing about this change that Page had fought and suffered, and subjected himself to general misconception. The triumph of the idea was in this sense a personal triumph, though Page would have been the last man to withhold credit from the sturdy souls, such as Aycock and McIver and Joyner, who accomplished far more than he in the practical work of embodying the new principle in legislation and administra-

tion. But Page was unparalleled as an advocate, and one of his most substantial claims to national gratitude is the part he played in reversing the Southern mentality on this fundamental matter.

CHAPTER XII

FULFILMENT

FORTUNATELY, Page was himself permitted to witness the change. His two trips through the Southern States, in 1881 and 1899, have already been described. He made another, in 1907, and of this also he has left a written record — chiefly in the form of letters to his wife.

"I have visited," Page wrote,[1] "nearly all the places that I visited ten years ago, and a good many more. Everything is different. The larger cities have become enormously larger and more active, and their tone, if you can speak of the tone of cities, is wholly different. The street scenes, the street conversations, the things that you see by going up and down through the business thoroughfares, now are the same as you will see and hear in active business cities anywhere else in the world. There is nothing, except, perhaps, the presence of the negro, to indicate whether you are in the South, or in the West, or in the North. The activities and methods of all sections are becoming very much alike.

"The smaller towns have become larger. Some have more than doubled their population and their activities. An even greater change has taken place in many parts of the country. You will see new houses well-painted, with well-kept yards about them. You will see better horses; you travel over far better roads; you meet men who are going at a faster pace. The conversation now is not about

[1] This particular passage is from an article in the *World's Work* for June, 1907, describing the changes wrought in ten years.

Reconstruction. In one place it is about alfalfa, in another it is about stock, in another about corn. You hear of any number of agricultural products besides cotton and cotton itself has a new meaning. There is as much difference between cotton at five and six cents a pound and cotton at ten and twelve cents a pound, as there is between poverty and affluence. I doubt if anywhere in the world there has been so rapid a change in what may be called the fundamentals of good living and of sound thinking and of cheerful work, as the change that has taken place these ten years in many of these rural districts. Many a farmer who was in debt to his 'factor' now has money in the bank, a bank that itself did not exist ten years ago. The inherent good nature of the people approaches something like hilarity. If you direct the conversation toward prosperity, they will crack jokes with you about the needy condition of Wall Street and remind you that their banks have money lent at interest in New York.

"I think that every educational institution that I visited has a new building or more than one. The men that you talk with speak less of their poverty of equipment and tell you, with pride, what has been done within the last five years. I suppose that the most hopeless places in the world a decade ago were the offices of the superintendents of public instruction in most of these commonwealths. In some of them, you would find men without hope, without plans, without any adequate knowledge of an educational system, who lazily compiled lists of inaccurate figures, drew pitiful salaries, and published dull reports that had no particular meaning. In these same offices now, or bigger and better offices, you find a staff of men and women at work who are ready to show you hundreds of photographs of ramshackle old schoolhouses that have been abandoned and of handsome new ones that have been

built to take their places. They will show you photographs of children planting flowers in the school-yards, and of other children doing manual training work in the schoolroom. They will take from their desks well-kept, neat and accurate reports which show an enormous increase of expenditure and great pride in the schools. They will tell you of travelling libraries; they will explain how pictures have been put up in the schoolhouses.

"In the colleges you find that the men who teach spent their last vacations either abroad or at some university centre in the United States. They no longer speak a local language. They still tell, of course, of insufficient equipment; but, if you will inquire, you will find that the States have enormously increased their appropriations for the state schools; that the schools which are maintained by private subscription or by religious sects have been successful in increasing their endowments; and, best of all, you will find that the schools now have local support — support by ever-increasing local taxation. And no school or other institution can permanently exist on any basis but the basis of local support.

"You will find everywhere the spirit of coöperation. There was a time when every institution was conducted only with reference to itself. Now it is conducted with reference to all the others, and with reference to the secondary schools. The annual Conferences for education in the South have been both cause and effect of this change. An enthusiasm for coöperation has been the result. In fact the best index of all this great change which makes for the growth of efficiency is coöperation — a spirit of working together. In the old time, under the old influences, every plantation was a sort of principality in itself. Every unit of working life cultivated 'independence,' which was another name for isolation. This tendency ran throughout

the old Southern methods. Every college was independent of every other one. So, too, every railroad; every religious sect; every industry. Work and thought were unorganized. Coöperation — there was no such thing. . . .

"The general impression, therefore, that one brings away after two or three months' journey to these States and to these country regions, this year, is not only an impression of cheerfulness, of prosperity, of extraordinary material progress; but a deep-rooted feeling that there has been, for a long weary time, not only a general misunderstanding of the qualities and characteristics of the Southern people by the people of other parts of the Union, but a general misunderstanding likewise of their own qualities and capacities by the Southern people themselves. They had not come to their own until these recent years, and they had fallen into the habit of thinking that they were different from other people. They are, of course, like the people of the North, and like the people of the West, and it needed only the touch of industrial prosperity to reveal not only their kinship but their essential identity. In the sense in which you have been accustomed to read about it, and to think about it, whether you live in the North or in the South, there is no longer any 'South.'"

To Alice Wilson Page

The Lorraine, Norfolk, Virginia.
January 13, 1907.

Dear —

If Norfolk is a fair sample, the change that we are all saying is coming over the South is real. I presume of course that the exposition (it will be opened in three months now) has much to do with the bustle of this particular city. But surely it is a busy place. They are build-

ing, hauling, unloading, rushing, buying, selling — crowds of people here, and everybody alive and energetic. I could not get a room at the Monticello Hotel. This — a very good one — is not far off, and I have no trouble about my mail.

The speech-making educational crowd kept me a day longer in Richmond than I meant to be kept. But I got much for it. That's all right. I don't mind being a day behind.

The farmer's day does seem to be coming at last. At a conference in Richmond there was a man — a mere farmer — who on the poor land between Richmond and Danville made $6000 last year, net, by a dairy; and it wasn't a big one either. The educational alliance will send him through several counties to show farmers how to grow corn and grass and alfalfa. His farm before he took it — yielded five bushels of corn per acre. Now the same land yields one hundred bushels.

The old land's waking up!

I'm very busy, very well, and I'm having a pretty good time — till night comes. The hotels have improved 1000-fold!

To Alice Wilson Page

On to Alabama —
from Atlanta to Birmingham.
2 February, 1907.

My dear —

Your letter saying you will go from Aberdeen on Tuesday comes just as I am leaving Atlanta. I had already sent a letter to you at Charlotte! Well, I've had a tiresome good time here; for I have, I think, got a pretty good insight into Georgia life and opinion as it now is, from many points of view. Ten-cent cotton and the rise of other values

have done what no kind of appeal to reason, to nationalism, to duty — could have done in a life's time; for prosperity has brought a distinctly new era in Southern thought, in the Southern attitude to the nation, to life itself! The people are at work and they have present things to think about. That single fact has wholly changed them and — radically changed them. So, at least, it is here, and to a somewhat less extent in North Carolina. I suppose that I shall find more of the old feeling of seclusion in Mississippi along with all its attendant states of mind. A clear proof of this very great and almost sudden change is the universal need and wish for immigration. Everywhere men and women are needed who will work. The demand for white servants in all these cities is insistent and universal. The people are getting beyond contentment with the slovenly and untrustworthy ways of negroes. That argues a great advance. Even the negro barber is losing ground because men have discovered that he doesn't do his job as well as a white barber. This is purely economic. As soon as the tide once starts, there is going to be a strong flow of immigrants hither — how strong nobody yet realizes.

As I have written you, I rather dread this long trip westward and southward now; but I think the dread is only because it takes me away from you. Perhaps I've become too dependent on you! For it is a very real pleasure to see the rising of these people. I know of no more cheerful thing in the world; and it will be a pleasure to write about it.

My love to all at Charlotte and to — *you.*

To Alice Wilson Page

Montgomery, Alabama,
Wednesday Night, February 6, 1907.

MY DEAR —

Here I sit, waiting for my baggage, by an open window on a beautiful night, having read in an afternoon paper at Birmingham that a foot of snow fell yesterday in New York. Surely I am glad that you are away from Teaneck Ridge. And the sequel of this story is, I do wish that you were here, dear.

There is no longer any Southern problem of the old sort. Problems there are, and enough of them. But the discouraging old Southern depression and aloofness are gone. It is a different people. And I am astonished to find that the very programme that I laid down in the *Chronicle* in Raleigh twenty years ago is the programme that has brought this change not only in the condition but in the very character of the people. More than that, I recall a plan that I worked out in Cary,[1] long before the days of the *Chronicle* — a plan for the economic broadening of the vision of these people — and I had a most intelligent man sit down in Birmingham last night and expound that very plan as the result of "twenty years of thought."

Things are happening as they ought to happen — in response to large economic forces. The first force to lift them out of the past is financial — industrial — success. Not all other things will follow, but most other things will, and they will follow rapidly, too.

So far I have come along without mishap or misadventure of any sort; and I am very well indeed. I am out of doors most of the time. I am walking, riding, talking, seeing things — somewhat more physically active than I

[1] The summer of 1879. See *ante*, Chapter IV, page 110.

am when I am at home; and that is all that is necessary to keep me in very good condition. I have not even encountered any bad food but for a single meal at an out-of-the-way place in Georgia. The hotels are very, very greatly improved. To-be-sure a good deal of the time I have eaten at clubs and private houses; but everywhere I have, so far, found good fare. The trains and the hotels are everywhere crowded, too.

The old land is coming up. Some of these days it may even think again and come to have some influence on the politics and economic thought of the world.

Yours, with all my love,

W. H. P.

To Alice Wilson Page

Gulfport, Mississippi,
Sunday, 10 February, 1907.

My dear —

. . . Here I sit by two open windows, the sunshine streaming in, the table moved so as to get it in the shade, my lightest flannels and my summer suit on, and I am quite warm enough — just a little too warm. The Gulf is within a stone's throw; a long pier goes out a mile and a half to deep water, and there two tramp steamers and four or five big schooners are loading. There isn't a better place in all creation nor better weather for my work. . . .

And it continues to be an interesting experience. The reactionaries are here. They show themselves in curious ways. In this lower South they are many and strong. But the battle has been won against them in every way except as regards the negro. I'm afraid he's a "goner." They will not train him fast enough, nor longer tolerate him untrained. He will disappear faster and faster. I don't

know where he'll go; but he will never be given a fair chance and he will get the worst of the economic pressure.

People have money everywhere. This first-class and rather costly hotel is full. There are nice houses for hundreds of miles along the Gulf shore and resorts at short distances. The trains are all crowded. Trolley cars run everywhere. And yet this is — Mississippi!

All I wish is that you were here. But, in a few weeks, I'll go to Orlando and we'll stop on our way home at Savannah, Charleston, and perhaps elsewhere, and enjoy ourselves in a little outing together. The rush I have been through would kill you; but this place and its quiet would just suit you and me. Good-bye, dear love.

To Alice Wilson Page

Gulfport, Mississippi,
Sunday, 10 February, 1907.

This takes strong hold on me, dear — this rising of the people in zigzag ways, so fast along some lines, so slow along others. The romance of it is very engaging too. Then there is the soft climate, inexpressibly pleasant at this time of year.

In larger ways it calls for larger leisure of treatment — for meditation. Then great stories will come out of it. I must so husband my time and resources as to get at it in this larger way somewhat yet before I die.

W. H. P.

With this note of cheerful realization, the story of Page's work as an American citizen reaches its appropriate end. His subsequent career as Ambassador has been told elsewhere. These last letters Page wrote at Gulfport, Mississippi. Only a few miles to the east was the little cottage

where, nearly thirty years before, he had spent an afternoon with Jefferson Davis, discussing Southern questions and listening as the Confederate President foretold the inevitable disruption of the United States. What changes a single generation had witnessed — from the already almost forgotten secession South of Davis to the modern South of Page then unfolding on every hand! Sitting by his open window on this warm February day, with the sunlit waters of the Gulf of Mexico stretching before him, it would have been natural enough had Page's thoughts reverted to his early days at Cary, when his boy's mind obtained its first insight into the forces that were to work this transformation, and to the part that he himself had played in the achievement; — to "little grandfather" and his gentle advocacy of reconcilement and Jeffersonian progress; to his father, Frank Page, whose love of the South and devotion to the Federal Union presented no conflict in loyalty; to those early days at Trinity and Braxton Craven, the pioneering advocate of the public school; to Randolph-Macon and Jack Wardlaw, and the knowledge of the great English worthies obtained from Thomas Randolph Price; to the enlarging experiences of Johns Hopkins and the glimpses of departed human glory presented by Basil L. Gildersleeve; to his editorial adventures in the basement office of his *Chronicle* — and his proddings of the Mummies; to Aycock and the paladins of the Watauga Club; and to the spirited campaigns in the press and platform he had waged for this rejuvenated South. At last his native region was in a fair way to reversing the mistakes of the era succeeding 1830, and to reconstituting itself on the lines originally laid down by Madison, Marshall, and Jefferson.

It seems a far distance from Raleigh to London, from the broken South to the European battlefields, yet Page him-

self, could he have foreseen the completion of his own story, would have regarded the events of his latter days merely as the logical extension of his earlier career. His life was thus a consistent and symmetrical whole; it represented the undeviating fulfilment of a few ideas. The future was to make live again, on a vastly larger scale, the convictions of the past. For his part in the crisis from 1913 to 1918, his years in the United States had been a definite and an inspiring preparation.

FINIS

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